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Flourishing in the Midst of Microaggression: The Experience of Existential Well-Being of Puncak Jaya Students in Yogyakarta

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Abstract

Exposure to subtle daily interaction discrepancies, or microaggressions, can trigger psychological distress for minority students in university towns. This study aims to explore in-depth the daily experiences of microaggressions and their dynamic impact on the psychological well-being and existential dimensions of students from Puncak Jaya Regency, Papua, in Yogyakarta. Utilizing a qualitative approach with Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), primary data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews with four (4) active students selected via purposive sampling. Data analysis was conducted inductively and idiographically, adhering to the IPA thematic analysis procedure. The study extracted three super-ordinate themes: (1) Typology of distinct microaggressions in social interactions, encompassing microinsults regarding intellectual capacity and microinvalidations regarding regional identity; (2) Mechanisms of proximal distress and hypervigilance, manifested as constant alertness in public spaces and internalizing distress accompanied by behavioral code-switching; and (3) Existential vulnerability and collective resilience, characterized by the erosion of academic self-esteem adapted through protective isolation, existential identity crises, and the optimization of regional student communities (IPMAPUJA) as a collective psychosocial buffer. These findings provide empirical confirmation of Minority Stress Theory (MST) within the context of communal societies in Southeast Asia, while highlighting the importance of providing safe spaces and culturally competent clinical interventions to support the achievement of optimal psychological growth (flourishing) among migrant students.

Keywords: ***Flourishing; Hypervigilance; Microaggressions; Minority Stress Theory; Puncak Jaya Students.***

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INTRODUCTION

The issue of the dynamics of inter-ethnic relations and social adjustment in Indonesia remains a serious socio-psychological challenge, especially for minority groups who migrate domestically to pursue higher education in big cities (Wijanarko & Syafiq, 2013). Papuan students who come to study cities such as Yogyakarta are faced with very complex adaptation demands. The difference does not only lie in physical-visual characteristics, but also in cultural clashes, variations in language dialectics, and social systems adopted from the region of origin (Wijanarko & Syafiq, 2017). Especially for those who come from Puncak Jaya Regency—one of the central mountainous regions in Papua—this challenge is growing more and more layered. They are not only faced with the process of accustoming to the dominant culture of the local community, but also with an extreme socio-geographical transition from the region of origin to the urban center. These environmental changes require drastic adjustments in aspects of communication, rhythm of life, and social structure, which simultaneously place them in a vulnerable psychosocial position. In the study city, these immigrants are often confronted with the attribution of certain social stereotypes that develop in society (Agustina & Fitriani, 2020), both related to academic capacity, socio-economic background, and certain sociopolitical perceptions (Zafina & Kusumaningrum, 2021). Cultural gaps and the position of these sub-groups as immigrants are the main foundation of their high vulnerability to interpersonal barriers in daily interactions.

As an area that bears the title of "City of Students" and a cultural center, the Special Region of Yogyakarta is generally known as a communal space that is friendly, safe, and upholds the values of tolerance. However, in the context of the adaptation of Papuan students, the interpersonal reality encountered in the field sometimes shows the existence of sociocultural ambivalence. In addition to an inclusive environment, there are still relational barriers in the form of *macroaggression interaction discrepancy* that specifically targets their identity background. These structural barriers have been recorded in several previous scientific literature, ranging from the existence of veiled restrictions on access to residential accommodation based on regional backgrounds, communication barriers with public authorities, to the escalation of communal tensions involving group sentiment (Human Rights Watch, 2024; Wijanarko & Syafiq, 2013). The presence of macro environmental distress provides an affirmation that psychological pressure and social challenges due to ethnic background are chronic burdens that have the potential to overshadow the comfort of adaptation of migratory student groups throughout their study period. In contrast to manifest social barriers that are open and explosive, the development of clinical psychology and contemporary multicultural psychology has begun to shift the focus to a much

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more subtle, faint, and pervasive form of psychological suppression in everyday life, known as *microaggression*. Sue (2010) defines it as a brief insult, a degrading implicit message, or an *invalidation* of the reality experience of a minority group, which is generally expressed automatically and unknowingly by the perpetrator in daily interactions. Although often considered trivial or just a common misconception by the environment, microaggressions have a destructive impact that is cumulative due to their constant, repetitive, and infiltrating nature of daily social interactions (Torres-Harding et al., 2012). This continuous exposure will gradually crystallize into chronic minority stress (Meyer, 2003) which predicts a drastic decline in the degree of mental health of individuals (Ong et al., 2013). Based on a preliminary study through a brief exploratory interview with one of the students from Puncak Jaya in Yogyakarta, the manifestation of this daily microaggression is evident in academic social interactions:

"In class, during group discussions, when I start talking in my dialect, my friends often smile suppressed or suddenly shift the conversation as if what I say is unimportant or illogical. There was no swearing, no violence, but that repeated subtle rejection made me feel like my existence and mind were considered to be non-existent in this space." (Preliminary Interview, February 12, 2026). In the treasure of positive psychology, the ideal psychological development condition of a student is no longer simply measured by the absence of symptoms of mental disorders, but by the success of the individual to achieve *a flourishing status*, which is a dynamic condition in which the individual is able to function optimally psychologically and socially, and has strong existential resilience in actualizing his potential in the midst of environmental changes (Widiantoro, 2026). However, within the framework *of Minority Stress Theory* (MST) developed by Meyer (2003), the presence of microaggressions acts as *a distal stressor* (external environmental stressor) that interrupts and limits the individual's capacity to achieve positive mental health. Diffuse *distal stressor* excitation —such as subtle alienation in the classroom—triggers the emergence of *internal proximal stressors* in students, in the form of chronic anxiety and hypervigilance in every social interaction as a form of adaptive response that is detrimental to psychological energy (Meyer, 2003). For students from Puncak Jaya, constant exposure to these implied messages that are less favorable not only disrupts the process of academic self-adjustment (Pangathousands & Rahayu, 2023) and erodes self-esteem (Duran et al., 2014), but also suppresses the realm of *psychological well-being* (Ryff, 1989), which is characterized by dysfunction of social relations (Prasetyo & Haryadi, 2019) and existential identity crises (Jacobsen, 2006).

Although studies on the experiences of Papuan students on the island of Java have been widely published, the majority of the current literature still focuses on the issue of general self-

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adjustment and resolution of cultural conflicts (Wijanarko & Syafiq, 2017), or simply reviews cases of extreme macro barriers legally. Research in Indonesia that explicitly uses the microaggression framework (Sue, 2010) to dissect how subtle stressors interrupt the achievement of *flourishing status* in specific sub-groups such as students of Puncak Jaya Regency in Yogyakarta is still very rare. Mainstream literature often generalizes the entire region of Papua, thus failing to capture the specific typology, uniqueness of the socio-geographical burden, and phenomenological essence of the subtle stressors internalized by this sub-group of central mountain ranges. As a result, their understanding of the dynamics of their positive mental health becomes incomplete.

Therefore, this study aims to deeply understand the essence of the microaggression experience experienced by Puncak Jaya students in Yogyakarta and describe in detail how these experiences affect psychological well-being and interrupt their existential *flourishing* achievements. The findings of this study are expected not only to enrich the theoretical application of *Minority Stress Theory* in a multicultural context in Indonesia, but also provide a theoretical basis for the formulation of culturally sensitive positive mental health interventions in higher education institutions.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative approach with the *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis* (IPA) method. This approach was chosen because of its main characteristics that are aligned with the research objectives, which are to access, explore, and deeply understand how individuals personally interpret significant *lived experiences* in their social world (Smith et al., 2022). IPA design requires researchers to engage in a *double hermeneutic process*, in which researchers try to interpret participants' efforts to interpret their personal experiences related to the microaggression phenomenon they face on a daily basis (Smith & Osborn, 2015). The research focus is oriented towards dissecting psychological and existential meaning in particular, moving away from mere surface descriptions towards contemporary psychological interpretations (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Researcher Stance and Reflexivity

In the tradition of science, researchers position themselves as dynamic main instruments, where the researcher's thinking and sociocultural background are recognized to influence the data interpretation process. Therefore, the principles of reflexivity and epistemological *bracketing* are

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strictly applied (Peshkin, 1988). During the interview process until the theme analysis took place, the researcher continuously compiled a reflective memo (*reflective journaling*). This step aims to realize, isolate, and manage the initial assumptions, theoretical knowledge, and personal prejudices of researchers related to the issue of racism, Papuan conflicts, and tribal stereotypes. Thus, the interpretation produced in the discussion section is purely derived from the essence of the subjective meaning conveyed by the participants, not the projection of the researcher's personal bias.

Participants

Qualitative research with IPA design prioritizes *small, purposive, and homogenous sample* sizes to facilitate very in-depth idiographic analysis (Smith et al., 2022). Participants in this study amounted to four (4) active students from Puncak Jaya Regency, Papua. Participant selection was carried out using *purposive sampling* techniques to capture individuals who had rich information and experienced firsthand the phenomenon being studied (Patton, 2015). The inclusion criteria set include: (a) Bachelor program (S1) students active in universities in Yogyakarta; (b) originally from the central mountainous region (Puncak Jaya Regency); (c) active in the regional organization of the Puncak Jaya Student Association (IPMAPUJA); (d) confirm in an initial screening session that they are experiencing daily treatment identified as subtle racism, degrading messages, or implied rejection; and (e) demonstrate adequate self-reflection abilities to articulate their internal world. In order to enforce the principles of research ethics, the real identities of the participants were disguised using the anonymous codes P1, P2, P3, and P4. The demographic characteristics of the participants are summarized systematically in Table 1.

Table 1. ***Demographic Characteristics of Research Participants***

Participant Code	**Age (Years)**	**Gender**	**Study Program (Initial)**	**Semester**	**Duration of Stay in Yogyakarta**
P1	21	Male	Social Sciences (IS)	VI	3 Years
P2	22	Male	Engineering	VIII	4 Years

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Participant Code	Age (Years)	Gender	Study Program (Initial)	Semester	Duration of Stay in Yogyakarta
			(TK)		
P3	20	Women	Humanities (HM)	IV	2 Years
P4	21	Male	Economy (EK)	VI	3 Years

Note: All participants are confirmed to be from Puncak Jaya Regency and have an active academic status.

Data Collection

Primary data was collected through *semi-structured in-depth interviews* guided by flexible interview protocols. Semi-structured interviews are the most ideal data collection method in science because they provide a space for participants to freely direct the narrative flow, while also providing an opportunity for researchers to explore new psychological areas that arise during the dialogue (Smith et al., 2022). Interviews lasted 60 to 90 minutes for each participant and were conducted in an idiographic manner. In order to stimulate the honesty of the narrative and mitigate anxiety due to discussing racially sensitive issues, the location of the interview is determined entirely by the participants based on the principle of *safe space*, such as in a private boarding house room or the internal room of the IPMAPUJA secretariat. The lighter question protocol is designed openly, focusing on two main domains: *"Can you recount specific moments when interacting in Yogyakarta where you felt treated differently or subtly demeaned because of your identity as a child of Puncak Jaya?"* and *"How do you interpret, feel, and manage the impact of the experience on your survival here?"*. The entire interview was recorded in digital audio format after obtaining written consent (*informed consent*) from the participants.

Data Analysis

The data analysis stage was carried out strictly following the inductive-idiographic procedure *of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis* (IPA) adapted from Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2022). The analysis is carried out linearly per single case first before conducting a collective

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synthesis, through the following systematic steps:

1. **Familiarization and Data Immersion:** Transcribe the results of the interview recordings verbatim, followed by reading the transcript repeatedly while re-listening to the audio recording to gain an immersive *immersion* with the world of participants' feelings.
2. **Initial *Notes*:** Annotate the margins of the transcript in detail, covering three levels of commentary: descriptive (focus on the explicit content of the narrative), linguistic (focus on the use of language, metaphors, pauses, cries, or intonation), and conceptual (focus on the interpretation of abstract psychological and existential meanings).
3. **Developing Emergent *Themes*:** Mapping and abstracting the results of dense margin comments into phrase formulations of psychological themes that are more concise, while retaining the essence of the original quotation of the participant's language.
4. ***Clustering*:** Groups emerging themes that have conceptual similarities into a single theoretical cluster to form *Super-ordinate Themes*.
5. **Next Case Analysis:** Close the first participant's analysis file, then repeat steps 1 to 4 on the next participant's transcript independently to respect the uniqueness of each individual (idiographic principle).
6. ***Cross-Case Analysis*:** Compile a thematic master table to integrate and contrast all *Super-ordinate Themes* from the four participants to find the pattern of the essence of the phenomenon experienced collectively.

Research Ethics and Quality (*Trustworthiness*)

All research protocols have met the ethical standards of humanities research, as evidenced by the signing of informed *consent* sheets without coercion, data confidentiality guarantees, and permanent identity disguise. The quality and reliability *of* this qualitative interpretation are controlled through criteria adapted from Lincoln and Guba (1985), which include:

- **Credibility via *Member Checking*:** A summary of the results of psychological interpretation and a draft of the theme arrangement was returned to the four participants for reconfirmation (*member checking*). This step ensures that the researcher's interpretation is aligned and accurate with what the participants intended (Creswell & Poth, 2018).
- **Dependability via *Audit Trail*:** Researchers provide a transparent and systematic *audit trail* track record, ranging from raw interview transcripts, reflective memo diaries, to theme-forming decisions.

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- **Confirmability through Cutting-Edge Theoretical References:** Each interpretation of the theme is dialogically tied with established theories, especially *Minority Stress Theory* and *the concept of Flourishing*, to ensure that the results of the analysis have a solid theoretical and academic foundation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Interpretative *Phenomenological Analysis* (IPA) which was applied idiographically to the narrative transcripts of four students from Puncak Jaya Regency in Yogyakarta resulted in three *super-ordinate themes*. The three themes comprehensively describe the essence of daily microaggression experiences and the dynamics of their impact on the psychological well-being and existential dimension of the participants.

Summary of Thematic Findings (Synthesis of Science Analysis)

The thematic structure extracted from the participants' world of subjective meanings is organized into a conceptual matrix to guarantee the qualitative rigor of the data. The structural relationship between the Main Theme, Sub-Theme, and the essence of the findings description is presented systematically in Table 2.

Table 2. ***Thematic Synthesis of Microaggression Experiential Structure and Psychosocial Impact***

Tema Utama	Sub-Theme	Key Findings Description
1. Typical Typology of Microaggressions in Social Interactions	1.1.*Microinsults* Related to Intellectual Capacity	Participants often receive conditional appreciation that implicitly casts doubt on academic competence, or assumes the success of the study as a result of specific affirmative policies.
	1.2.*Microinvalidation* (Contextual Elimination) Related to Regional Identity	Historical realities, geographical burdens of origin, and the uniqueness of the participants' sociocultural backgrounds tend to

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Tema Utama	Sub-Theme	Key Findings Description
		be ignored or reduced in daily communication in the study environment.
2.Mechanism of Proximal Stress and Hypervigilance	2.1.Social Hypervigilance in Public Spaces	The appearance of a constant and tiring state of mental alertness due to the attribution of excessive environmental attention to the specific physical characteristics of the participants.
	2.2.*Internalizing Distress* dan *Code-Switching* Perilaku	The tendency to harbor negative emotional responses to avoid social confrontation, accompanied by modification of speech style (*dialect*) to mitigate social distancing.
3.Existential Vulnerability and Collective Resilience	3.1.Erosion of Confidence and Protective Isolation	A decline in academic *self-esteem* due to the accumulation of degrading messages, which encourages withdrawal into the internal circle of regional organizations (IPMAPUJA).
	3.2.Existential Identity Crisis and *Chronic* Homesickness	The emergence of fundamental questions about the meaning of one's existence in the city of study, accompanied by a strong urge to return to the area of origin as a form of existential coping.

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In-Depth Discussion Based on Theme

Theme 1: Typical Typology of Microaggressions in Social Interactions

Based on a hermeneutic analysis of the participants' narratives, the manifestations of subtle racism experienced by students from Puncak Jaya in Yogyakarta do not manifest in the form of open physical or verbal aggression (*macroaggression*), but in the form of vague messages that infiltrate daily social relations. This phenomenon is divided into two main sub-themes:

1.1. Microinsults Related to Intellectual Capacity

Participants consistently reported experiences in which their cognitive competencies were asymmetrically assessed by the surrounding environment. This form of microaggression is often wrapped up in the form of praise or excessive expressions of surprise when participants are able to show academic performance on par with other students. This psychological experience is described in depth by P1 in the context of classroom learning interactions:

"During the group presentation, there were fellow students who responded with the sentence, 'Wow, I'm impressed, you can present material as clear and scientific as this. I guess...' The sentence hangs, but I catch the implicit meaning behind the pause. There is an initial dubious assumption that a student from the interior of Papua is capable of structured thinking. The compliment that contained a tone of astonishment actually felt inferior to my intellectual capacity." (Independent Interview, P1).

1.2. Microinvalidation (Contextual Elimination) Related to Regional Identity

The second sub-theme identifies the tendency of the social environment to negate, minimize, or cancel out the psychological reality and sociocultural background inherent in the identity of the participants' presence as a representation of the central mountain community. The surrounding environment often demands that participants assimilate absolutely without considering the extreme sociogeographic discrepancies they have just experienced. P4 reflects the form of the waiver as follows:

"Whenever I try to tell you how hard our adaptation struggle is coming from the mountainous region of Puncak Jaya, or when talking about longing for the situation there, the response that is often received is 'Ah, don't think about it too much, just focus on studying in Java, just live what exists.' The statement seems to consider the mental burden and the process of cultural transition that we are going through as trivial and invalid to feel." (Independent Interview, P4).

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Analisis Teoretis Tema 1:

The findings in Theme 1 provide strong empirical confirmation of the taxonomy of racial microaggressions developed by Sue (2010). The manifestation of *microinsult* experienced by P1 indicates that deficit thinking is still at work in the multicultural education ecosystem, where the intellectual capacity of certain ethnic minority groups is often unconsciously positioned as an anomaly (Kohli & Solórzano, 2012). These subtle messages that communicate surprise at the intelligence of a minority student have a detrimental long-term impact, as they slowly erode an individual's *academic self-esteem* and create an additional psychological burden in the form of the need to constantly prove self-competence in front of the public (Duran et al., 2014).

Meanwhile, the phenomenon *of microinvalidation* recorded in the P4 narrative reflects a veiled form of rejection of the historical and geographical uniqueness experienced by the Puncak Jaya sub-group. The environmental demands that participants be indifferent to their regional background and "focus only on comfort in Java" act as a form of psychological *invalidation*. According to Sue et al. (2020), when the majority social environment consistently minimizes the distress felt by minority groups, individuals will experience existential alienation, where they feel that the entire spectrum of their life experiences, cultural identities, and adaptation grievances are considered invalid, unimportant, and have no place to express within public spaces.

Theme 2: Mechanisms of Proximal Stress and Hypervigilance

The accumulation of exposure to microaggressive interpersonal messages does not stop at the cognitive domain, but activates the participants' chronic internal stressor responses. This phenomenon manifests itself into two operational sub-themes that illustrate the high psychological costs that must be paid by students from Puncak Jaya in order to maintain self-stability:

2.1. Social Hypervigilance in Public Spaces

Participants reported the perception of excessive mental vigilance (*hypervigilance*) when in a communal environment outside the campus (such as shopping centers, public transportation, or residential areas). This condition is triggered by the awareness that their specific physical characteristics often trigger the attribution of attention or unusual gazes from the surrounding environment, which is perceived as a signal of implied distrust. P2 describes the emotional exhaustion caused by this constant alertness:

"When I enter a public space like a self-service store, there is automatically an internal urge to act

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extra carefully in every movement of my body or behavior. I felt as if my movements were being watched differently because of my striking physical appearance in the crowd. This awareness that I am constantly being monitored creates a psychological strain that is very exhausting every time I step out of the living area." (Independent Interview, P2).

2.2. Internalizing Distress and Code-Switching The

second sub-theme identifies *coping* strategies that tend to *internalize distress*. When faced with uncomfortable interpersonal situations, participants preferred to harbor emotional discomfort (such as sadness or anger) rather than express it openly. This pattern is accompanied by the act of *code-switching*, which is a conscious effort to modify the dialect, speech intonation, and style of dress to be in harmony with the dominant cultural norms in the study city. P3 reflects the dynamics of harboring these emotions:

"I chose to exercise restraint and remain silent when I received unpleasant comments. There was a concern in me that if I responded or clarified in a firm tone, the environment would immediately label me as an emotional or confrontational individual. In order to avoid the secondary labeling, I choose to keep my feelings to myself and only express them when I gather with my fellow IPMAPUJA colleagues." (Independent Interview, P3).

Theoretical Analysis Theme 2:

The activation of psychological conditions experienced by P2 and P3 provides a very precise conformation of the internal compartment of *the Minority Stress Theory* (MST) initiated by Meyer (2003). In the MST landscape, daily microaggressions act as *distal stressors* (external stimuli) that constantly oppress the individual. This pervasive external pressure triggers the birth of *proximal stressors*, one of the main indicators of which is social hypervigilance (Lian & Rahmawati, 2021). This chronic state of alertness forces participants' cognitive systems to always anticipate potential social rejection, which in the long run predicts mental fatigue, an increased prevalence of generalist anxiety, and a significant decrease in psychological energy levels (Nadal et al., 2014; Wei et al., 2010).

On the other hand, the behavior of *internalizing* and adjusting the communication style (*code-switching*) shown by P3 reflects the high *cognitive cost* that must be incurred by minority students in impression *management*) for psychological peace (Wang & Wang, 2024). The act of suppressing authentic emotions is carried out as a fortress of defense from the social stigmatization inherent in society (Goffman, 1963). While these *code-switching* and assimilation

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strategies are effective in reducing daily social distancing and mitigating potential interaction discrepancies, contemporary literature confirms that prolonged suppression of original cultural identities can trigger internal identity conflicts, severe emotional *exhaustion*), as well as alienation from oneself due to loss of personal authenticity (McCluney et al., 2021; Johnson et al., 2021).

Theme 3: Existential Vulnerability and Collective Resilience

The cumulative impact of microaggression exposure and activation of proximal distress does not only stop at the appearance of situational anxiety symptoms, but penetrates deeper to the point of disturbing the existential dimension and future orientation of the participants. Nonetheless, these dynamics also activate adaptive group defense mechanisms, as unraveled in the following two sub-themes:

3.1. Erosion of Self-Confidence and Protective Isolation

A series of interpersonal experiences that doubt competence slowly grow the seeds of *self-doubt* in the academic realm. This condition makes participants feel that they do not fully have a safe space to actualize themselves in the campus environment, so they choose to carry out protective isolation, namely withdrawing from universal social association and limiting interaction only in the circle of fellow students from Puncak Jaya. P4 reflects this withdrawal:

"There were times when I lost my confidence to just express my opinion in the lecture hall. There was an anxiety that anything I said would be judged from the point of view of discrediting stereotypes. To secure peace of mind, I decided to limit social interaction on campus and spend more time with my colleagues at IPMAPUJA. There I felt completely accepted and unconditionally." (Independent Interview, P4).

3.2. Existential Identity Crisis and Chronic Homesickness

The last sub-theme highlights the shocks in the aspects of the participants' *sense of purpose* in the study city. The psychological burden felt triggers a deep longing for *homesickness*, which is not just interpreted as a longing for family, but as a form of existential longing for a living space where their identity is not questioned or required to always prove themselves. P1 articulates the existential crisis as follows:

"The urge to return to Puncak Jaya often appears very strong, especially when the burden of the mind is piling up. In the city of study, I felt like I had to always wear a 'mask' and prove that I was capable. While in my hometown, I can celebrate myself as I am without the pressure of interaction.

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Sometimes I have to be skeptical about whether this decision to migrate is worth the psychological fatigue I have to endure every day." (Independent Interview, P1).

Theoretical Analysis of Theme 3:

Findings in Theme 3 indicate that daily microaggression manifestations have the potential to suppress the achievement of *Psychological Well-being* (PWB) of minority students, especially in the dimensions of *Self-Acceptance* and *Positive Relations with Others*) (Ryff, 1989; Keyes, 2002). The protective insulation demonstrated by P4 is a form of defensive coping to avoid more severe distress (Solórzano et al., 2000). The discomfort of interaction in public spaces makes participants limit their social mobility space, which if it takes place in the long term can hinder the process of healthy academic assimilation as well as limit the opportunities for the expansion of their professional social networks during the study period.

Furthermore, the phenomenon *of chronic homesickness* and existential identity crisis experienced by P1 reflects the presence of threats to the individual's direction, life goals, and psychological comfort in a new environment (Littlewood & Lipsedge, 1982; Smith et al., 2017). The desire to stop studying or return to the home area is a signal of existential exhaustion due to environmental pressures.

However, this IPA analysis also succeeded in capturing the very crucial aspect of resilience through optimizing the role of the community of regional organizations such as IPMAPUJA. In this context, IPMAPUJA does not only function as a gathering place for overseas students, but acts as a psychosocial buffer and a highly adaptive collective coping instrument (Agustina & Fitriani, 2020). This community provides a *safe space* that provides shared emotional validation of microaggression experiences that are often invalidated by the majority environment (Lestari & Purba, 2022). The presence of this solid group support system helps neutralize daily psychological wounds, restore self-esteem that had been shaky, and re-cultivate *relational resilience* so that students are still able to maintain their academic functions in the midst of interpersonal limitations. This regional community intervention is an important pillar that keeps minority students able to step towards optimal psychological growth conditions or *flourishing* in the study city.

Conclusion of the Results and Discussion Chapter:

Overall, the psychological dynamics of students from Puncak Jaya in Yogyakarta are a continuum that moves from the reception of daily subtle stressors (*Theme 1*), the activation of the self-defense fortress through hypervigilance and emotional suppression (*Theme 2*), to the

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conclusion that existential shocks are successfully mitigated through the strength of the community's collective resilience (*Theme 3*).

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

CONCLUSION

This interpretive phenomenological research succeeded in mapping the complex and layered structure of microaggression experiences in the interpersonal realm of students from Puncak Jaya Regency in Yogyakarta. The essence of this phenomenon is manifested in two main typologies, namely *microinsult* that implicitly doubts the academic intellectual capacity, and *microinvalidation* that minimizes and negates the uniqueness of the sociogeographic identity background of the participant's origin.

The study's key findings suggest that chronic exposure to this vague form of daily interaction discrepancy activates internal mechanisms that are aligned with *Minority Stress Theory* (MST). These external pressures manifest in the form of proximal distress in the form of tiring social hypervigilance in public spaces and the practice of *code-switching* behaviors to mitigate social distancing, which in the long run comes at the expense of self-authenticity. The cumulative impact of these dynamics triggers challenging adjustments to the dimension of existential well-being, which is characterized by protective social isolation, a decline *in academic self-esteem*, and an identity crisis that has the potential to trigger high *academic burnout*.

Theoretically and methodologically, this research makes an important scientific contribution to the contemporary psychological landscape through two main contributions:

1. **Cross-Cultural Validation *of Minority Stress Theory*:** Provides a *rich, idiographic description* of microaggression operations in a specific sociocultural context in Indonesia (the interaction of students in the central highlands of Papua on the island of Java), which simultaneously validates the relevance of the application of MST in the context of communal societies in Southeast Asia.
2. **Theoretical Connection of Microaggressions and *Psychological Well-being*:** Affirms that subtle microaggression stimuli not only trigger acute emotional distress that is situational, but penetrates to undermine the core dimensions of *Psychological Well-being*, especially in the aspects of *Self-Acceptance* and *Positive Relations with Others*). This expands the literature on the existential-structural impact of microaggressions.

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ADVICE

1. Practical Recommendations (Clinical, Institutional, and Community)

- **Culturally *Competent Care*:** Counseling and psychology service centers in higher education institutions are recommended to organize counseling programs that have high cultural sensitivity. Psychological intervention approaches, such as *culturally tailored* Cognitive Behavioral Therapy *(CBT*), need to be oriented towards validating minority distress experiences, cognitive restructuring of *internalizing distress*, and developing coping strategies to reduce cognitive burden due to *code-switching* behaviors.
- **Optimizing the Function of Regional Communities as *Safe Space*:** Managers of universities and local governments of origin are important to facilitate and support the strengthening of regional student organizations (such as IPMAPUJA). This organization has been empirically proven to play a vital role as a *relational resilience buffer* and a collective safe space that is able to mitigate social isolation and maintain student group self-esteem.
- **Special Advice for Immigrant Students:** Students are advised to actively utilize the communal space of regional organizations as a medium of emotional validation and carry out regular self-affirmation practices in *order to maintain the stability of self-esteem*. In addition, it is important to cultivate *self-compassion* and consciously seek professional help to a counseling center if the intensity of hypervigilance or withdrawal impulses is felt to begin to interfere with daily adaptation functions.

2. Academic Recommendations and Institutional Policies

- **Evidence-Based *Cultural Competency Training*:** Higher education institutions are advised to design and implement structured *cultural awareness* training programs for the entire academic community, including lecturers, educational staff, and student organizations. This training needs to integrate specific material on the typology of microaggressions to mitigate the emergence of unintentional interaction bias in daily relationships on campus.
- **Cultural Diversity Literacy Inclusion:** Integrating the values of ethnic diversity, sociocultural literacy, and the introduction of the historical-geographical backgrounds of various regions of the archipelago into the general course curriculum (MKU). This curricular step is important to increase intercultural empathy and reduce stereotypes among the majority of students.

3. Follow-up Research Recommendations

- **Large-Scale Quantitative Method Expansion:** Future researchers are advised to conduct quantitative survey research with a wider sample to measure the overall prevalence of

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microaggressions, as well as test mediation and moderation models between microaggression variables and clinical indicators (such as depression, anxiety) or academic behavior (such as *intent to leave*) in the Papuan student population on a macro basis.

- **Exploration of Adaptive Coping Orientation and Flourishing**: *Given that this study focuses on the trajectory of stress, further qualitative research is recommended to explore more deeply the opposite side, namely specific resilience mechanisms*, successful active coping strategies, and *protective factors*) which enables minority students to continue to achieve optimal psychological growth (*flourishing*) overseas.

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