

CHAPTER II

DESCRIPTION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND THEIR ADAPTATION PROCESS RELATED TO THE HOST CULTURE

A. Overview of International Students at Diponegoro University

2.1. International students

UNDIP allows international students to pursue their studies, and some of them receive different types of scholarships. One of these scholarships is the “Kemitraan Negara Berkembang” Scholarship, popularly known as the KNB Scholarship, which is a financial assistance program offered by the Indonesian Government to prospective international students from developing countries who wish to pursue their Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctorate degree at one of the universities in Indonesia. Additionally, some international students at UNDIP receive the Diponegoro International Students Scholarship (DISS) or other scholarships offered by the university.

UNDIP had around 42 international students from different countries around the world in 2023, which are from different programs (S1 undergraduate degree, S2 postgraduate degree, and exchange cultural namely Darmasiswa). UNDIP allow those international students to pursue their study and some of them are from different kind of scholarship, such as Kemitraan Negara Berkembang Scholarship, popularly known as KNB Scholarship, is a financial assistance offered by the Indonesian Government to prospective international students coming from developing countries to pursue their degree (Bachelor, Master or Doctorate Degree) at one of the universities in Indonesia. Some of them get the Diponegoro International Students Scholarship (DISS) scholarship, and the other Undip Scholarship.

All of these international students come from different countries around the world, including Sierra Leone, Pakistan, Syria, Zimbabwe, Panama, Kenya, Kazakhstan, Madagascar, Sudan, Solomon Islands, Rwanda, Botswana, United States, Laos, Vietnam, China, and others.

The majority of the students are from Pakistan, with 19 students, followed by 4 students from Madagascar and students from Sierra Leone. The diversity of these countries represents the unique backgrounds and experiences that each student brings to their studies at UNDIP.



Image 1:
International

students Gathering

Each of those international students, studies in a different faculty and pursues a different major, meaning they have distinct circles of friends. Some may only connect with people from the same cultural background, while others may prefer not to make any friends due to experiences of discrimination. In varying environments, individuals may initially receive appreciation upon first meeting, but some also encounter discrimination. Experiences differ; not every student may have positive memories, as some may have negative ones. Moreover, barriers can vary; each person's barriers, such as communication, language, or cultural differences.

Most of the international students at Undip choose to live in the university's dormitory. This option provides convenient and accessible accommodation for students. Living in the dormitory allows international students to be near campus facilities and resources, making it easier for them to engage in academic and extracurricular activities. Additionally, staying in the

dormitory offers opportunities for international students to interact and build connections with fellow students from diverse backgrounds, fostering a sense of community and support.

However, some of them prefer to live outside of the dormitory, in off-campus housing “Kos”. Living in a dormitory or not always provides international students with a chance to experience the local culture and customs more closely. They can interact with local students and learn about Indonesian traditions, festivals, and daily life. This cultural immersion can enhance their overall study-abroad experience and contribute to their personal growth.

2.2.The Cultural diversity of the international students' informants

From Rwanda

Rwanda is located in east-central Africa, it is a small landlocked country in the heart of Africa and boasts a rich and captivating culture that has withstood the test of time. Known for its lush, mountainous landscape, Rwanda is home to a diverse array of ethnic groups, each with its own unique traditions and customs. One of the defining features of Rwandan culture is the importance placed on land and agriculture (Chigbu et al., 2019). In regards to Rwanda's language, social norms, and food are another central aspect of its culture. The primary language spoken is Kinyarwanda, a Bantu language that is also used in neighboring Burundi. The cuisine of Rwanda is heavily influenced by its agricultural heritage, with staple foods including beans, cassava, and sorghum. Rwandan culture is also renowned for its vibrant arts and music. Traditional Rwandan dance, such as the Internet, is a captivating display of athleticism and cultural expression. Rwandan artisans are skilled in weaving, pottery, and metalwork, producing intricate and beautiful pieces that are prized both domestically and internationally (Ali et al., 2014)

From Sierra Lion

Sierra Leone is a West African country with a rich cultural heritage influenced by its diverse ethnic groups, colonial history, and geographical setting. The official language is English, while the national language is Krio, an English-based creole language. The country is home to several ethnic groups, each with its own language (Chigbu et al., 2019). In regards of their social

norms include community and family, with extended families often living together and elders highly respected. Greetings are important in Sierra Leonean culture, often involving lengthy inquiries about each other's well-being. In addition, their religion is diverse, with Islam being the dominant religion, followed by Christianity and traditional African religions. Traditional customs include ceremonies and festivals, which mark important life stages. Food is staple, with rice and cassava being staples. Popular dishes include Jollof Rice, Groundnut Stew, Fufu and Soup, Plasas, and Fried Plantains. Street food includes akara, kankankan, and puff-puff. Common beverages include ginger beer, poyo, and fruit juices (*Sierra Leone - Culture, Traditions, Music / Britannica*, n.d.)

Form Madagascar

Madagascar, an African island nation, is known for its unique and diverse culture, influenced by its African, Asian, and European heritage. The national language is Malagasy, spoken by the majority of the population, and French is also an official language due to Madagascar's colonial history. The island has numerous dialects, reflecting its diverse ethnic groups. In addition, Madagascar social norms include fihavanana, which emphasizes kinship, friendship, solidarity, and respect for ancestors (Razana). Greetings and communication are important, and social hierarchies are traditionally hierarchical. Family is the central social unit, and marriages are important events. Taboos, or prohibitions, govern various behaviors and practices. Food staples include rice, cassava, sweet potatoes, and corn, with popular dishes like Ravitoto, Romazava, Zebu, He'omby Ritra, and Lasopy. For the street food includes sweet rice cakes, sambos, and koba. Beverages include ranovola, ranon'ampango, fresh fruit juices, and local rum. Madagascar's cultural diversity makes it a unique and fascinating country (Domenichini-Ramiaramanana & Domenichini, 1979)

From Pakistan

Pakistan is a South Asian country with a rich cultural heritage, including Urdu as the national language and English as the official language. The country have several language that reflecting its ethnic diversity, such as Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, Balochistani, Saraiki, and others.

Food in Pakistan includes staple foods like roti and Naan, rice, and popular dishes like biryani, nihari, karahi, kebabs, and haleem. The social norms of Pakistan differ from the other country it includes family, hospitality, and dress code. Family is the cornerstone of social structure, with extended families living together and respecting elders. Hospitality is a key aspect of Pakistani society, with sharing meals and hosting visitors being integral parts of social life. Religious practices in Pakistan are Islamic. Social etiquette is also important in Pakistan (*Pakistan Culture / PDF*, n.d.)

From Sudan

Sudan, a northeastern African country, has a rich and diverse culture influenced by its historical, ethnic, and geographical influences. The official language is Arabic, while national languages include English. Food in Sudan is staple foods like kisra, asida, full medames, gurassa, mulah, and tamiyya. Popular dishes include sambusa, fried fish, boiled peanuts, and hibiscus tea. They have common social norms as Pakistan especially in regards of the religion, because most of the people in Sudan are Islamic practices (Family et al., n.d.)

B. Overview of the importance of adaption in a new environment

1. Description of the barrier to adapt in the host culture

Adaptation is a process that influences an individual's progress and prosperity and entails accepting the existing norms of a society they are generally not familiar. According to (Alasmari, 2023) The goal of adaptation is to use social processes to coordinate individuals' and society's interests. Adaptation allows an individual to grow in any situation, even the most adverse. Individual growth is the only way to achieve social progression, in which each individual is considered a value factor in the community's total development or progress. That's why, adaptation of the individual is a process of absorption, of interiorization of the existing norms.

a. Barrier with the culture

Each country around the world has its own unique culture and societal norms, which is why one of the most surprising aspects for people who move abroad is experiencing culture shock. At UNDIP, each international student may encounter different types of culture shock depending on their original culture. Some international students may struggle to adapt to the social norms and language in Indonesia. These differences can impact their daily lives; for example, in Indonesia, it is considered impolite to give something with the left hand, whereas in their own culture, it may not be an issue. International students should respect the cultural values of the host culture, even if they are unfamiliar or different from their own habits.

Some of International students prefer to meet friends from their own cultural background to maintain a connection with their heritage and to feel less isolated in a new and unfamiliar culture. However, institutions of higher learning need to create supportive environments that encourage international students to also interact with local students and broaden their social networks (web). By promoting interactions between international and local students, institutions can enhance intercultural understanding and create a sense of belonging for international students. International students appreciate both the comfort of their own culture and the chance to immerse themselves in a new one.

International students often find comfort and support in maintaining connections with friends who share their cultural background. Being in a new country with a different language and culture can be challenging and overwhelming. By meeting friends from their own culture, international students can share experiences, discuss common challenges, and provide emotional support to one another. They can freely express themselves in their native language, share cultural traditions, and celebrate festivals and holidays together.

Building friendships with peers from the same cultural background helps international students develop a sense of belonging in their new environment. These friendships provide a familiar and supportive community where they can be themselves without the fear of judgment or misunderstanding. Having friends who understand their cultural references, traditions, and values can help reduce feelings of isolation and homesickness. In addition, they may get a beneficial for language support. It means, International students who are still struggling with the language barrier may feel more comfortable communicating in their native language with friends from their home

country. They can practice their language skills, receive help with language nuances, and gain confidence in their language abilities through these interactions.

While studying abroad, international students face numerous challenges, including cultural differences and closely related issues (e.g., language barriers, difficulty adapting to religious beliefs and the associated restrictions on lifestyle, customs, and unfamiliar food), as well as personal issues like isolation/loneliness and difficulty forming friendships within the local community (Alasmari, 2023). However, the nationality of the students may play an important factor of the adjustment of students abroad (Chirkov et al., 2008). For instance, Compared to students from culturally distant nations, students from countries that are comparable or close to the country tend to feel less stress and difficulty transitioning.

a. Barrier with the food

Many international students prefer to cook their own food rather than buying food from outside establishments for a variety of reasons. One reason is the familiarity with their home cuisine, as cooking their own food allows international students to maintain a connection with their cultural heritage and traditional dishes. It provides an opportunity to recreate meals that may not be easily found in local restaurants or cafeterias. By preparing their own food, international students can savor the flavors and tastes that remind them of home. Additionally, some international students have specific food preferences or dietary restrictions, such as avoiding spicy food or having allergies, which can be better accommodated when cooking their own meals.

Also, it can be because of the cost-effectiveness, since all of them are international students who get different scholarships, cooking at home can be more cost-effective compared to buying food from restaurants or cafes. International students often have limited budgets, and preparing meals at home allows them to save money by buying groceries in bulk and cooking in larger quantities. This can help stretch their resources and provide more affordable meal options. In addition, the reason why most international students prefer to cook their own food can be because of the social and community building. It means, they can provide opportunities for international students to socialize and build a sense of community. They can invite friends or fellow students over for a meal, share their cultural dishes, and engage in culinary exchanges. Cooking together

can be a bonding experience that fosters friendships and creates a supportive network within the international student community.

a. Barrier with the language

Most international students at UNDIP often face challenges with the language barrier, as Indonesian is typically unfamiliar to them. Adjusting to a new language can be one of the most daunting aspects of studying abroad, particularly when the language of instruction and daily communication differs from one's native tongue. In Indonesia, Bahasa Indonesia is the primary language used for instruction, communication, and daily interactions, which can pose significant difficulties for students who are not proficient in it. Language barriers can impact various aspects of an international student's life, including academic performance, social interactions, and overall integration into the university community. Without a strong command of the local language, students may struggle to understand lectures, participate in class discussions, communicate with professors and classmates, and navigate daily life outside of the campus.

a. Stereotypes

This is the attitudes that lead people to judge others exclusively based on their own or others' taste groups. Stereotypes often result in negative attitudes towards others or specific responses to the traits and character of a general person or group. Story-based stereotypes, position ethnicities in such a way that chaos or conflict is generated by other ethnicities negatively impacting the environment, and the impact may affect one ethnic group. By making assumptions, stereotypes generalize people based on limited information. Can it be said that prejudice randomly classifies people into categories and ignores individual differences? Stereotypes do not see individuals as unique. Stereotypes can affect anyone and anywhere, and stereotypes are one of the challenges to overcome (Alberts et al., 2019).

UNDIP hosts a diverse community of international students from various countries, each bringing their unique backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. However, despite this diversity, international students, particularly those from Africa, may face stereotypes from some members

of the local community. Stereotypes about African students can be rooted in cultural misconceptions, biases, or preconceived notions perpetuated by media portrayals or limited interactions with individuals from Africa. These stereotypes may include assumptions about intelligence, socioeconomic status, behavior, or even physical appearance. Such stereotypes can have harmful effects on African students, leading to feelings of isolation, discrimination, and unfair treatment. They may encounter instances of racial profiling, microaggressions, or exclusionary behavior based on these stereotypes.

a. Prejudice

This is a negative emotion that comes in many forms, including racial prejudice, ethnic prejudice, gender prejudice, religious prejudice, and so on. According to (Alberts et al., 2019), prejudice includes considering other groups inferior, having a hostile nature towards other groups, and behaving in a friendly manner with other groups at times but keeping a distance at other times. Discrimination is the actual manifestation of bias. Discrimination is the restriction of a group of people's access to resources based solely on their membership in a group, such as race, ethnicity, gender, occupation, and so on. Since prejudice is one of the communication barriers, increasing interaction with prejudiced people/groups and getting to know them better is the best approach to reducing prejudice (Samovar et al., 2017).

As in the stereotype, the most victims of prejudice are international students from Africa. Prejudice against African students can stem from deeply ingrained stereotypes, misconceptions, and biases that have been perpetuated over time. These stereotypes often paint a narrow and negative picture of African people, portraying them as inferior or somehow different from others. Such prejudiced attitudes can manifest in various forms, including discrimination, microaggressions, and exclusionary behavior. African students may encounter challenges such as being subjected to racial profiling, facing barriers in accessing resources or opportunities, or experiencing social isolation due to unfounded assumptions about their backgrounds or abilities. These experiences can have significant negative impacts on their well-being, academic performance, and overall sense of belonging within the university community.