

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

International students nowadays are studying abroad all over the world. Especially when there is scholarship opportunity provided, as well as studying abroad at own cost. According to statistics of worlds' education data (OECD, 2013) the number of students enrolled in tertiary education outside their country of citizenship increased more than threefold, from 1.3 million in 1990 to nearly 4.3 million in 2011, representing an average annual growth rate of almost 6%. Recently OECD (2013) has stated that the number of international students has more than doubled between the year 2000 and 2011. The data of the year 2013 indicates that almost 4.5 million tertiary students are enrolled outside their country of citizenship. The largest numbers of international students are from China, India and Korea. Asian students account for 53% of all students studying abroad worldwide (OECD, 2013).

According to Handarman in UNESCO (2013), The Government of Indonesia through the Ministry of National Education provides three kinds of foreign HEIs scholarships programmes (Higher education institutions) such as the Beasiswa Unggulan, Beasiswa Kemitraan Negara Berkembang, and Beasiswa Darmasiswa Republik Indonesia. At first in the framework of Asian-African Conference for Capacity Building of Palestine, the government in 2009 provided Palestinian students the opportunity to study in Indonesia through the scholarship

programme Beasiswa Unggulan. The scholarship is offered for Bachelor (S1), Master (S2), and Doctoral (S3) degrees and the students will study at one of the Indonesian Universities. The second scholarship program was officially announced after the Tenth Conference of Heads of States of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) countries, held in Bandung on the 1 to 6 September 1992. It was concluded among the participants of the conference that scholarships will be provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture, which is now the Ministry of National Education (MONE). In 1993 the Government of the Republic of Indonesia started offering postgraduate (Master degree) scholarships to students from the NAM member countries. Due to the changes in geopolitics, the use of the term “NAM” was dropped and the programme renamed as Beasiswa Kemitraan Negara Berkembang (KNB) or “Scholarship on Developing Countries Partnership (DCP)”. The objectives of the scholarship are: (1) promoting deeper cultural understanding among developing countries; (2) strengthening the relationship and mutual co-operation among the participating countries; and (3) contributing to the development of human resource quality. The scholarship is provided for Master degree study at one of 13 Universities in Indonesia for 3 years, consisting of one year for the Indonesian language and preparatory programmes and two years for the Master programme on various subjects. The third scholarship offered by the Ministry of National Education is “Beasiswa Darmasiswa Republik Indonesia” (Darmasiswa Scholarships) for international students to learn Bahasa Indonesia, music, traditional dance and other studies in Indonesia’s higher education institutions. This scheme is the response of the government to scholarship

programmes offered by other countries. This scheme is for the period 2007 to 2015. The target number of students is increased from year to year: 500, 750, 1000, 2000, 3000, 4000, 5000, 7500 and 10000 students from 2007 to 2015 (UNESCO, 2013).

Related to the scholarship programs provided in Indonesia, this study will focus on international students who follow a KNB scholarship program given by the Indonesian Ministry of Education in Surabaya Indonesia, in particular international student in the Universitas Airlangga (UNAIR). According to the Directorate General of Higher Education Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (2012) the KNB program is considered very successful since hundreds of students from neighboring developing countries in Africa, South East Asia, East Europe and also South America had been awarded a Master Degrees in various fields from 13 major Universities in Indonesia. Since 2002, KNB scholarship has been offered to students from countries which are not the member of Non-Aligned countries such as Thailand, Fiji, South Korea, Suriname, Guyana, Turkey, Vietnam, Vanuatu, and other countries that want to follow this scholarship. In fact, this program has attracted more applicants, and by 2012, 597 students from 49 countries had been awarded this scholarship (Directorate of Institutional Affairs and Cooperation. Directorate General of Higher Education. Ministry of Education and Culture Republic of Indonesia, 2014).

Each year the amount of KNB students from various countries increases in Indonesia. According to the Director of Institutional and Cooperation Directorate General of Higher Education, Prof. Herman K. Dipojono Ph.D in the 2nd *International Student Summit*, said that the current amount of international students

in Indonesia is lately 8000 (UNPAD, 2014). Recently in the UNAIR, Universitas Airlangga, most of them come from the Middle East and African countries, especially Madagascar. The amount of KNB scholarship students since year 2012 – 2014 are nearly thirty from the countries: Uzbekistan, Laos, Suriname, Columbia, Madagascar, Yemen, Namibia, Pakistan, Sudan, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Thailand, Senegal, Nepal, Cambodia, Papua New Guinea, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and Lesotho (southern Africa) (interview on 30th of January 2015, with IOP staff of UNAIR).

International students, of course, have to leave their homes and live in another country. They can find the experience is both exciting and rewarding, but it may also bring changes which can sometimes make them feel anxious (Burnapp, 2009). The five most common problem categories faced by international students according to different researchers in Ozoglu et al., (2015) are: language/communication, academic, social/cultural, financial and psychological. Other demographic variables are: (racial) discrimination (Mak & Kim, 2011), and practical problems associated with changing environments (Smith & Khawaja, 2011; Mak & Kim, 2011).

The language or communication problem is about language barriers (Smith & Khawaja, 2011; Mak & Kim, 2011). Academic problems are for example: low study functioning (Hunley, 2010), educational difficulties (Smith & Khawaja, 2011), adjusting a new educational system (Mak & Kim, 2011). The social/cultural problems are acculturative stressors, such as culture shock (Hotta & Ting-Toomey, 2013) and adjusting different customs and norms. Acculturative stress is the stress generated by the process of adjustment to a new culture (Mak & Kim, 2011).

According to researchers mentioned in Hotta & Ting-Toomey (2013) “Culture shock is the effective, behavioral, and cognitive disorientation that sojourners experience when in an unfamiliar culture”. Another social/cultural problem is also due to the language barrier that is a reason to communication problem (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). Financial problems arise from factors such as loss of scholarship opportunities, work permit restrictions, and increases in tuition fees and accommodation costs (Ozoglu et al., 2015). Psychological problems are aspects of psychological distress such as loneliness (Hunley, 2010; Smith & Khawaja, 2011), physical and mental problems because of experiencing acculturative stress (Mak & Kim, 2011).

The researcher in this study accentuate loneliness as a problem that needs to be focused on the international students, because according to Heinrich & Gullone (2006) loneliness has been demonstrated to be associated with a number of psychosocial difficulties (e.g., low self-esteem, low social competence, poorer quality social interactions), as well as mental health problems (e.g., anxiety, depression, suicidal behaviors), and physical health issues (e.g., poorer immune and cardiovascular functioning, sleep deficiencies). Moreover according to other researchers mentioned in Heinrich & Gullone (2006), some sufferers of loneliness exhibit problematic behaviors such as alcohol or drug abuse, and symptoms including eating or sleep disturbances, fatigue, headaches, as well as disorders including anxiety, or depression, without even realizing the possible involvement of social problems (Heinrich & Gullone, 2006).

The researcher in this thesis, as a member of the international student group, experience that studying abroad can be difficult for each student, especially when he or she is not prepared for living in a new country, new place or environment, different weather, different food taste, another culture and custom, and the many rules set up by the society he or she never had before. This can be proved by the research of Gurbanova (2014) on international students' social adaptation in Indonesia Surabaya studying at the Universitas Airlangga. According to Gurbanova (2014), students were experiencing self-adaptation problems and challenges such as: difficulty learning the Indonesian language, difficulty adapting with the weather in Surabaya, and difficulty with the food taste and different culture. It is concluded by Gurbanova (2014) that in the process of adaptation many international students did not get much services to their needs. Many depend on friends or classmates as a way of independently solving problems. From the research result analysis on personal psychological adaptation,

Gurbanova (2014) study found the following:

According to the whole study, loneliness and longing were very common to respondents. Almost all respondents explained that they are 'lonely' and sometimes 'missing' their home while living in Indonesia.

Most of the respondents in this study stated that loneliness, longing, disorientation, or stress, are difficulties they face. It can be assumed that, International students experiencing adjustment problems contain depression, hopelessness, anxiety, longing, and loneliness.

According to Weiss (in Sonderby, 2013) loneliness can be understand as:

Loneliness is caused not by being alone but by being without some definite needed relationship or set of relations... In many instances it is a response to the absence of provision of a close, indeed intimate, attachment. It also may be a response to the absence of the provision of a meaningful friendship, collegial relationship, or other linkage to a coherent community.

To make clear that loneliness does exist among international students in UNAIR, the researcher has done some brief interviews beforehand asking a few international students in UNAIR the questions if they experienced a period of loneliness or isolation, and how they describe their experience of loneliness during their stay in Indonesia. The open questions are: 1)“How do you feel as a foreign student in Indonesia?” (Bagaimana perasaanmu sebagai mahasiswa asing di Indonesia?); 2)“When you feel lonely, how can you describe your feeling?” (Ketika kamu kesepian, bagaimana perasaanmu?); 3)“What do you do when the feeling exist?” (Apa kamu melakukan ketika perasaan kesepian muncul?)

The following are the answers:

Interviewee Miss A, trying in Indonesian language via Whatsapp and face to face:

Yang pertama...ketiga tinggal di Indonesia adalah merasa bingung karena budaya di sini sama Thai itu beda jadi kadang kadang saya tidak bisa adaptasi. Yang kedua saya tidak bisa berbicara bahasa Indonesia. Jadi membuat saya lelah dan sering bilang sama ibu saya ingin pulang karena tidak bisa bertahan.

Ya, pernah merasa kesepian. Sebelum ke indo juga saya pernah. Merasa seperti pisah sama orang lain...sering duduk sendiri. Ya, saya kadang waktu kuliah..tidak ada orang ketika saya tanya ... mau seorang bantu saya, tapi dia tidak aktif. Saya merasa seperti tidak ada menghargai.... Dan langsung marah dengan hal yang masih kecil.kecil hati.

Ketika saya merasa sepi, bingung, berbicara sama teman yang akrab kemudian kita akan jalan keluar untuk menghapuskan merasa sepi....buat kegiatan macam macam atau waktu sepi saya telephon sama keluarga saya....saya ingin ke luar kota. Saya gak suka tetap di kamar sendiri. Karena merasa kesepian jadi setiap hari atau satu minggu tiga kali ke mall atau salah satu tempat yang buat saya segar. (2015, March 22th, 26th & 15, 16 April, female (26), FISIP, Thailand 2013).

The first interview (miss A) if translated in English explains that: At first living in Indonesia has made her confuse, because the culture in Indonesia is

different with the Thai culture. Therefore she sometimes cannot adapt to it. The second is the language barrier. She cannot speak the Indonesian language, which makes her exhausted, and accordingly tells her mom every time she wants to go back home because she cannot withstand it. She has experienced loneliness at some points in time and also before she came in Indonesia. She often sits alone. Sometimes she feels lonely when having a class and there is nobody who pays attention to her, or when she asks about a problem in order to be helped, but there is nobody responding. She feels like there is nobody appreciating her, and directly becomes angry because of a little issue. A typical behavior of easily getting annoyed or angry because of being (sitting) alone. Normally she loves to talk with friends, except when there is a problem or an issue that has to be thought about. When she feels confusing lonely, she talks to a closed/ best friend and go for a walk outside together after to release the feeling of loneliness. They then create different activities, or when she feels lonely she calls her family. If there is an opportunity, she likes to travel outside the city such as Ponorogo with an Indonesian friend. Many reasons were for trying out the special food made over there, and also depending on the city, to feel the cool breeze. She does not like to be constantly alone in her room. Every day or three times in a week she goes to the mall or a place that refreshes her mind, because she feels lonely.

Interviewee miss B:

For sure, is kind of sad, ...uhm..uhmm..for the sad side is like. Feel like I am all alone. Is no one I can find. Some people which are having commons things. Is like everything is new, from food. How people behave.

Problems? Academically? Is language, language barrier...bahasa Indonesia. Is..Sometimes is hard. Too many words. Long words, different phonetics.

Because I am far away from my family , from my friends, from my environment. So is just new. Sometimes I want someone to be close to me, but I can't find. It is new, and because of the language. Yeah..You know sometimes when I feel lonely, I miss home, I miss friends, maybe what I can do, just make me feel good, just listening music, just watching movie. I want to, but I can't find it. I want to participate in sports, but maybe my acting is just me alone. Is hard to find someone who does not share the same experience. (2015, March 22th, female (29), Pusat bahasa, Tanzania 2014)

Interviewee miss C:

...uhmm..for especially like uhm the very first days I had experienced a cultural shock and also where I have to adapt moods and sometimes... language barrier, ...fears.. sharing culture barriers. It takes a while to understand each other, but in the beginning you feel like.. You are ...you are lost. You are lost and somehow you want to dismay yourself from your friends or maybe an environment where everyone is so socializing cause somehow you feel like they are isolating themselves to you...

Ooh yeah, the loneliness is always there...Especially like when your trying to make friends. It all starts from there, like I said before... is the language....their living style... different...type of living standard....different cultures....a different environment Especially when I am looking for....I wish there was a a fellow Namibian student. But unfortunately there is none.

But then if I am lonely, then I am trying to reach out to my closed friends that I've made here in Indonesia or met.reach out to my parents, my family back home.. by via Skype.but then whenever I feel lonely if I don't find anyone at home. If I cannot reach them, then I'll just have to find my friends here ...Starting an conversation. Or just.. go jalan-jalan.. in ..malls.... create an activity that will make you go out of the house and not really making you feel like you are lonely whereas there are people. So is better to socialize with the ones that are close. Closer to you like you know where you are right now. Just to develop that bond. (2015, March 22th, female (37), FKM, Namibie 2012).

From the interview it is known that miss A has lived in Indonesia for almost two years, but she just started her academic study this year (March, 2015). Living

in Indonesia has made her feel confuse, because of the different culture and language. Those are the reasons why she has a difficulty in adaptation. The impact of sitting alone in class, being avoided by others, and not feeling being appreciated, results into her loneliness problem. She is less motivated to talk to others, especially when there is a problem or something to think twice for in the social relationship with others in class. Her solution is to keep in touch with a very closed-friend from class or from elsewhere, creating activities such as visiting places outside the city Surabaya together if there is a chance, and forget about the loneliness feeling, or make contact with her family. Being alone in the room makes her lonely, that is why to avoid the boredom she regularly visits the Malls. The loneliness feeling can have psychological impact such as distress on the individual, and according to previous researches Hunley (2010) mentioned that the more students experiencing psychological distress and more loneliness, the lower their levels of functioning studying abroad at different time points in the semester. When considering the experience of loneliness, Weiss (in DiTomasso & Spinner, 1997) differentiate between the loneliness of social isolation and that of emotional isolation. In this case, it is a matter of perceived social isolation that is experienced by the student. According to Weiss (in Laursen and Hartl, 2013) perceived social isolation describes the subjective impression of social isolation. "Perceived social isolation is more than just awareness on the part of the individual that he or she is not socially integrated; perceived isolation assumes emotional pain" (Weiss, 1973 in Laursen & Hartl, 2013).

Miss B is one of the new students that just arrived in Indonesia late September 2014, and still learning the Indonesian language. For her, being lonely is a sad experience as an International student. She misses home, family and friends when lonely. Actually, she wants to socialize with others, but it is difficult to find someone or people that share common things. She feels like she is the only one with the need for participating in sports, because it is hard to find others in a group with the same interest. Everything is new. She would like to have someone close, but she could not find. The reason is also because of language barrier. That is why listening music and watching movie are helpful activities that makes her feel happy. According to Marginson, et al. (2010), loneliness is acute for many students, especially in the first few months, and often longer in the case of those students who have few co-culturalists to talk to. For students who are isolated, whose emotional and/or social bonds are weak or distant or non-existent, loneliness is hard to escape. In this case, the student is going through social and emotional loneliness.

Miss C has been studying in Indonesia for almost three years. From her response to the interview, she has a good experience as international student in Indonesia. Despite her experiencing a cultural shock, language barrier, adapting moods, or feeling lost in the beginning, in a certain time she managed to adapt well by understanding the situation, the native people, and moreover the different culture. Miss C has found a way how to love herself, her surroundings, and others. Loneliness for her starts especially when she is trying to make friends with the Indonesians, because of the language barrier. She prefers to make friends with the students who speaks the same language, whereas Indonesian friends come

secondly. Her loneliness is also described by her desire or hope that there was a fellow Namibian student to accompany her, but unfortunately she has to live without that. When she feels lonely she contacts her closed friends in Indonesia or her parents and family in Namibia via Skype. If the family is unreachable then starting conversations with friends here in Indonesia or going out for a stroll in the beautiful malls together are also helpful. In this case, the student can manage her loneliness by communicating with others, but it also depends on what type of the loneliness problem. Related to emotional and social loneliness (Weiss), Rotenberg & Hymel (1999) stated that “A person who lacks an attachment figure cannot fill the void by getting more friends; nor can having an attachment figure and compensate for the lack of friends”.

From the explanation above, we can see the differences between the three interviews. The three interviews above shows that loneliness does exist among the International students of UNAIR. They each came from a different year, their ages are different, and the impacts of loneliness on them are also different. Not all students experience it in the same way, and their coping strategy may vary from each other too. Loneliness may be a common problem, but according to Heinrich & Gullone (2006) mentioned before, there are severe risks for a person experiencing loneliness. Moreover, according to Marginson, et al., (2010): loneliness affects not only wellbeing and confidence but also the capacity to learn and grow in the country of education. Loneliness and coping with loneliness are among the primary factors that shape student security.

In this research, the researcher will use the interactionistic approach towards loneliness, because according to Weiss as the main writer of the interactionistic approach, loneliness is multidimensional (Sonderby, 2013). This means that there are different kinds of loneliness, including emotional- and social loneliness (Sonderby, 2013). According to Weiss, 1973 (in Sawir et al., 2007) students experience personal or emotional loneliness because of the loss of contacts with families and social loneliness because of the loss of networks. According to Weiss, 1982 (in Heinrich & Gullone, 2006) interactionist perspectives hold that loneliness arises from an interplay of personal, cultural, and situational factors. To find out what type of loneliness exist among the international students of UNAIR, and because of the importance of the students' health, therefore it is important to do a research on loneliness among international students of UNAIR. In chapter two loneliness will be further emphasized in this thesis.

1.2 Research Questions

In this thesis the researcher decide to do research on loneliness among International students in the Universitas Airlangga on the following formulated research question:

How does the international student describe the experience of loneliness while studying in the Universitas Airlangga?

Some specific questions related to the main question are:

1. What type of loneliness does the international student encounter while in Indonesia studying in the Universitas Airlangga?
2. What are the factors related to loneliness among the students?
3. What kind of coping strategy does the international student use when experiencing loneliness?

1.3 Significance of the research

There has been so many quantitative researches already done on loneliness before and very few recent qualitative researches of international students studying abroad such as the Australian study of international student security from Sawir et al. (2007). It was found that more than 50 % of the group students experienced problems of loneliness and/ or isolation, especially in the early months. Types of loneliness such as personal loneliness caused by the loss of contact with families, and social loneliness because of the loss of networks was mentioned according to Weiss, 1973 (in Sawir et al., 2007). A third kind of loneliness was cultural loneliness caused by missing the preferred cultural and or linguistic environment which can influence even students with adequate personal and social support.

Research from Janta, et al., (2014) is about coping with loneliness. The study is about a netnographic study of doctoral students, both domestic and international, coping with loneliness and isolation, and what types of tactics they use during different phases of their doctoral studies to overcome such issues. The data gathered through a netnographic study show that loneliness is a major problem for both domestic and international students and that it occurs at different stages of

the doctoral study. Tactics used by participants to deal with this issue include multiple forms of (face to face and online) social interaction, professional development and escape from the doctorate.

Another research on coping with loneliness is about college students' experiences of and coping with loneliness-possibilities of peer support (Marja et al., 2013). The research data were also obtained from the internet through a forum functioning as a support network for children and adolescent that is called "Loneliness internet group", and the analysis was qualitative content analysis.

Furthermore a research from Bajpai (2014) also shows that loneliness not only occur in college students (adolescent), university students (domestic or international), but also at old age people. The data in this research was collected through semi structured interviews with open and close ended questions, and analyzed by method of content analysis. The results of the study showed that loneliness was perceived as both positive and negative feeling. A majority of the older adults did not feel loneliness living in residential area as well as living in old age home. But in comparison people of old age home felt loneliness.

Many studies on loneliness has been conducted with different study group subject, based on the age groups, level of education, or different location. The researcher chooses to do research on loneliness among international students in the Universitas Airlangga in Indonesia. The research can be identical such as the Australian research, but it will still be different in its' own context. In Indonesia, the cultural setting and environment is different from other countries such as Australia, Europe, America, Africa, etc. Moreover every year the amount of

international student scholars are increasing in Indonesia (UNESCO, 2013). For that reason it is a good opportunity to do research on behalf of the international students' security or well-being. It is a qualitative (case study) research where the data will be collected by in-depth interview. This research on loneliness is new in Indonesia, because it will be the first, primary research in the Universitas Airlangga in Surabaya Indonesia on the international students.

1.4 Objectives of the research

The objectives of this study are based on the research questions mentioned before. This research intends to provide the reality or psychological clear view of loneliness among international students in UNAIR. The objectives are:

- 1 To investigate if international students in UNAIR experience loneliness as a problem, and requiring in-depth psychological understanding of Loneliness among international students.
- 2 To identify the types of loneliness among the international students.
- 3 To discover the factors related to loneliness among the international students.
- 4 To investigate their coping strategies, especially in difficult times when they are experiencing loneliness.

1.5 Benefits of the research

This study research contributes to the theoretical and practical field area.

Theoretical benefit from this research:

1. To give a theoretical contribution to the literature on loneliness applied to international students, and to enrich the knowledge in the field of psychology.

Practical benefit from the research:

1. In order to make the Indonesian government or Ministry of Higher Education who provides scholarship programs aware of the international students insight information of their psychological situation, is best to publish the research result. This information is about international student's psychological condition and awareness of their well-being, in hope to provide them better service (health service included), mobility, and financial stability. Moreover the published information is to give awareness and the hope to bring change by providing a special organized and guidance program in education institutions for international students, in order to earn their best way achieving academic success and advantages although their Indonesian language barrier or socio-cultural and psychological adaptation.
2. To make a publication of the research so that other people and the international students' government and their country embassy of origin will also read about it. This information is about the situation according to their country students in academic relationship with Indonesia. This research will inform about the supporting system fulfilling the needs of their students and what there can be done when the support is not enough.

3. To provide insight information of the international students to the International Office Partnership of the Universitas Airlangga (IOP in UNAIR) to be cooperative in assistance of international students problems of loneliness.
4. To provide insight information of international students to the faculties where international students are studying or will be studying in the future, in order to prepare special psychological service to them for example a help center for counseling, guidance or support in case it is needed from the Faculty or Institution.
5. To provide information to the future international students about strategies how to control loneliness in order to improve their psychologically function during their studies in Indonesia.
6. To provide information to people who are related with international students, for example the society so that they can understand the international student's situation better and also to help motivate them to overcome their loneliness.