CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Research Context

In this era of globalization, the number of international students has been continuously increasing worldwide, as more students choose to pursue their education abroad. Hosting international students has been an important factor in the development and growth of internationalization in education. Like other developing countries, Indonesia is expanding the number of international students studying at universities in Indonesia to promote the internationalization of higher education [1] This growth in internationalization makes a significant contribution to an institution, enhancing cultural diversity, classroom enrichment, and, most notably, its global reputation. Despite these important benefits, they often face difficulties adapting to their new environment, which can hinder their academic success. Moreover, these challenges are typically concentrated in two main areas, which are linguistic adjustment and academic adjustment.

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In some universities/schools, the medium of instruction and daily communication is Indonesian, which is a significant barrier for their foreign

[1]Fajarwati, I., & Suyanto, A. (2019). Student Mobility: Factors for choosing Indonesia as a Study Abroad Destination. People: *International Journal of Social Sciences*, *5*(3), 514–530

students, where language barriers are one of the main challenges they face due to a lack of proficiency in Bahasa Indonesia. Language barriers significantly impact the academic achievement and motivation of international students, and how linguistic challenges affect the students' ability to engage in coursework, make academic writings, hamper comprehension in lectures, limit participation in discussions, and lead to reduced confidence and lower academic performance.[2] Although other international students who take the Indonesian language program still experience difficulties in classroom participation, this is mainly because the language used in the classroom differs significantly from the language used outside of the classroom environment.[3]

On the other hand, academic adjustment is another major issue. International students face differences in pedagogy, assessment methods, workload, and classroom expectations. International students cited unfamiliar academic practices and assessment procedures as major challenges.[4]

Given these challenges, school management plays a crucial role in facilitating successful adjustment for international students. Schools must do more than deliver curricula; they must function as support systems. Additionally, to help international students to adjust well and succeed

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[2] S. P. Jarar and F. Kurniawati, "Language Barrier and Its Impacts on Motivation and Academic Achievement among International Students at Universitas Indonesia," Jurnal Pendidikan Humaniora 13, no. 1 (2025): 44.

[3] T. T. Emehinola, Ilfiandra, and Ipah Saripah, "International Students' Adjustment Challenges in Indonesia," Journal of Innovation in Psychology, Education and Didactics 24, no. 1 (2020): pp. 35–50.

[4] Y. Hapsari and Hamamah, "International Students in Indonesia: A Study on Academic and Socio-Cultural Adjustment" (2019),

academically, the university hosting them must provide a conducive atmosphere, service, and environment.[5] Universities need to develop structured approaches to facilitate both linguistic and academic integration for international students. For instance, effective language management policies, including programs like Bahasa Indonesia for Foreign Speakers (BIPA), English language support, and immersive language environments, can help bridge communication gaps.[6]

Universitas KH Abdul Chalim accepts international students as part of its vision to become an international university and globally promotes education with an Islamic perspective. Universitas KH Abdul Chalim actively offered scholarships to different countries, especially from regions with a significant Muslim population, given its well-established reputation and welcoming of international students. These students still face difficulties and are still adjusting to their new environment, especially in terms of their academics, especially the new students.

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Nevertheless, linguistic difficulties and academic adjustment have been extensively covered in research regarding international students; the majority of these studies concentrate on the viewpoint of the students rather than the institutional management strategies intended to solve these problems.

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[5]Wahyuningsih, M. (2020). Challenges of foreign students' cultural adjustment to Indonesian culture and impacts on their academic achievements. *KnE Social Sciences*.

[6]Marsevani, A. A., Satrio, A. A., Zahra, et al., "International Students' Adjustment towards Implementing Indonesian Language in Communication," Issues in Applied Linguistics & Language Teaching (2024): 110–122.

This study, titled “Management Strategy of the Foreign Office in Addressing Linguistic and Academic Adjustment Challenges among International Students in UAC”, aims to analyze and understand the support provided by the universities in addressing the challenges faced by their international students. The findings of this study will offer useful recommendations for improving current practices and creating a more supportive, inclusive environment for international students.

B. Research Focus

This study aims to answer the following research questions;

1. What are the strategies are being implemented by the Foreign Office to address linguistic and academic adjustment challenges among international students at Universitas KH. Abdul Chalim?
2. What specific linguistic and academic challenges are faced by International Students at KH Abdul Chalim?

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C. Research Objectives

The objective of this study is the following:

1. To analyze the strategies being implemented by the Foreign Office to address linguistic and academic adjustment challenges among international students at Universitas KH. Abdul Chalim.
2. To analyze the specific linguistic and academic challenges faced by International Students at KH Abdul Chalim.

D. Research Benefits

This study will serve as a source of information regarding the "Management Strategy of the Foreign Office in Addressing Linguistic and Academic Adjustment Challenges among International Students at Universitas Abdul Chalim".

Furthermore, the results of this study could be highly significant and beneficial to the following:

1. Theoretical Benefits

Theoretical benefits refer to the research contribution to the development, strengthening, and refutation of scientific theories. This study's theoretical benefits include;

a. Serving as a research study in the field of Islamic Education Management (MPI), especially concerning institutional management strategy for supporting international students' linguistic and academic adjustment challenges.

b. Providing a reference for students and future researchers in exploring theories regarding the Management Strategy of the Foreign Office in addressing linguistic and Academic Adjustment Challenges.

2. Practical Benefits

The practical benefits of this study include;

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a. For researchers - The results of this study also contribute to the existing literature and can serve as a reference for researchers who undertake similar studies.

b. For Universitas KH Abdul Chalim – this study benefits the University. It provides information for implementing and improving the management in addressing challenges faced by their international students that can affect their academic performance.

c. Faculty Members – provide insights on how to better handle or respond to the diverse linguistic and academic needs of their students, especially their international students.

d. International students will benefit from this study, which identifies more effective strategies to support their linguistic development and academic adjustment in helping improve their academic success.

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3. Benefits of the Institution –

a. This study provides contextual and empirical data for educational institutions, particularly Universitas KH. Abdul Chalim, regarding the management strategies implemented by the Foreign Office to help international students with their language and academic adjustment issues. The results can be used as a guide by educational institutions to comprehend the actual circumstances, requirements, and difficulties that overseas students encounter when adjusting to the academic and linguistic environment.

E. Previous Research and Research Originality

Through a review of existing literature, the researcher identified several studies relevant to this study. Refers to the study on the Management Strategy of the Foreign Office in Addressing Linguistic and Academic Adjustment Challenges among International Students. The provided existing literature becomes the basis and support for this study.

1. Kim Tatyana, Thesis 2020, "Academic and Sociocultural Adjustment Experiences of International Students Studying in Kazakhstan". This study uses qualitative research, using a case study design. The research was undertaken at one private Kazakhstani university hosting a relatively large and diverse body of international students. Fourteen overseas students and four university administrators were interviewed to identify the students' adjustment experiences and factors affecting them, as well as to reveal how the university contributes to the students' integration into the host community. The findings suggest that proficiency in local languages was the most important factor that affected the overseas students' adjustment experiences. Those who spoke the Russian language upon arrival in Kazakhstan adjusted better. Meanwhile, their peers, who were not proficient in local languages, started feeling more adjusted after acquiring either of them. Gender and country of origin were the second most influential factors. Whereas female students experienced issues connected with accommodation to local food, their male peers reported being exposed to bullying. Due to similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds, overseas

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students from post-Soviet countries adjusted faster than their peers from other countries. Language barrier and cultural differences were major factors that inhibited overseas students' adjustment. In contrast, faculty support, engagement in friendship networks on campus, as well as cultural proximity, prior cross-cultural encounters, and openness to cultural diversity contributed to the students' smoother adjustment.[7]

2. Rafika Mustaqimah Wardah, Thesis 2021, "Self-Adaptation and Culture Shock of Indonesian Postgraduate Students in Europe and American Countries. (A Study of Intercultural Communication). The research method used was descriptive qualitative. The number of informants, as many as six people, was obtained by a non-probability sampling technique. The stages in data collection techniques in this research were: observation method, in-depth interview method, library method, and documentation method. The study aims to analyze the process of self-adaptation of Indonesian postgraduate students in European and American countries. Analyze the forms of culture shock experienced by postgraduate students in the aforementioned countries. The result shows that in the student's adaptation process, there are several stages of adaptation, namely cultural adaptation when students enter a new culture and interact with the community, and an enculturation process emerges, namely when students with easy to follow the behavior of society in a new environment, deculturation is when students

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[7] K, Tatyana. "Academic and Sociocultural Adjustment Experiences of International Students Studying in Kazakhstan" [MA Thesis]. Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education, 2020.

choose to keep the old culture and assimilation, namely students begin to minimize the use of the old culture and adopt to a new culture. There are four levels of culture shocks experienced by students, namely the Honeymoon phase or the honeymoon stage, the Crisis Phase, of the stage of getting challenges, the Adjustment Phase, which is the stage of understanding the environment, and finally the bi-cultural phase or the adaptation stage of immigrants, living with two different cultural backgrounds.[8]

3. Emehinola Taiwo Temitayo, Thesis 2020, "Patterns and Problems of International Students Self-Adjustment. A Case Study of International Students at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia". A qualitative research approach and a case study method were used for this study. Data was collected from five (5) international students at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI) using interviews. The research findings show that at the beginning of studying in UPI, especially for the first three (3) months, most international students tend to face excessive emotions and make use of psychological mechanisms. They exhibit rational deliberation and self-direction. Most international students are unable to make use of past experiences, and they show an unrealistic and subjective attitude, which is a clear sign of an abnormal adjustment. International students also face self-adjustment problems such as language barriers, isolation from classmates,

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[8] R. M. Wardah, Adaptasi Diri dan Culture Shock Mahasiswa Postgraduate Indonesia di Negara Eropa dan Amerika (Suatu Kajian Komunikasi Antarbudaya) (Master's thesis, Universitas Hasanuddin, 2021)

cultural differences, tardiness, financial problems, and technical problems. These students cope with these adjustment problems by seeking help, improving their language skills, relating with other international students, denial of the problem, entertainment, and prayer. This study also shows that international students from Asia and America exhibited normal adjustments on many normal adjustment indicators. International students from Europe and Africa exhibited normal adjustments in a few normal adjustment indicators. The findings of this study create an urgent need for a comprehensive guidance and counseling program tailored to international students, helping them cope with adjustment issues.[9]

4. Rima Amalia Eka Widya, Thesis 2021, "The Diplomacy Strategy of Indonesian Higher Education to Increase the Number of International Students Mobility". This study applied a qualitative and case study method to analyze the data. The concepts used to analyze the data were multi-track diplomacy and weak cognitivism of the regime theory. The research was conducted at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) by interviewing nine resource persons from the Office of International Affairs at UGM. Various data, literature, and documents were also gathered to provide a deep understanding of the internationalization agenda and its impact on the development of international student mobility at UGM. This thesis research

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[9] E. T. Temitayo, Patterns and Problems of International Students' Self-Adjustment: Case Study of International Students at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (Master's thesis, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, 2020.

aimed to analyze why the diplomacy strategy performed by the Indonesian higher education system has not significantly increased the number of international students' mobility from 2015 through 2019. Based on the study, the researchers argue that there are two aspects that cause a small number of international students' mobility; internal factors such as poor partnership management with strategic partners, indicated by the existence of MOUs and agreements with no inbound mobility outputs, and less institutionalization of partnership with strategic partners, and there is no specific or strategic monitoring and evaluation activities for international mobility and cooperations. While external factors are indicated by the dependency towards external funding, a long and complicated process of bureaucracy, less tactical support from the government, and less contribution from other supporting agencies, such as business and media. Based on the evaluation of participation in the epistemic community, it implies that this participation has not significantly increased the number of international students' mobility due to: the community has not offered strategic policy innovations to be applied by the members, the process of policy diffusion in the member's institution is not smoothly run, the policy makers in the university do not consider that the participation in the epistemic community is the dominant strategy to increase the international

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mobility, and also there is no institutionalization of policy on international student mobility offered by the epistemic community.[10]

5. Nabuyuki Makino, Thesis 2024, "Administrative Perspectives on International Students Support: A Comparative Study of International Office Professionals at Swedish Universities". This study employed a constructionist ontological and interpretivist epistemological stance. This study employs a qualitative research strategy. Several reasons support the selection of this approach. First, the study's constructionist ontology aligns well with the qualitative research strategy. Second, interpretivism, as the study's epistemological position, emphasizes the importance of examining the subjective interpretations and meanings that individuals assign to their experiences. This study explores the perspectives of international office professionals at Swedish Universities, with a focus on how these professionals view international students and how they perceive the provision of support accordingly. Specifically, the study examines two categories of institutions, new universities and large comprehensive universities, to offer a comparative analysis of support approaches in different settings. The findings demonstrated that international students are generally seen as autonomous and independent individuals across institutions. However, the practical emphasis of support reflects a careful balance between trusting students to be independent and offering necessary

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[10] R. A. E., Widaya. "The Diplomacy Strategy of Indonesian Higher Education to Increase the Number of International Students Mobility" [Thesis]. Universitas Gadjah Mada. 2021.

assistance to support their adjustments. Furthermore, differences in support approaches were identified across university categories, with new universities tending to adopt a more humanistic approach, while large comprehensive universities exhibited a more instrumental approach. By covering these aspects, the study contributes to understanding students' support for international students from an administrative perspective, questioning the prevailing approach of providing support solely in alignment with students' expected needs. It also offers implications for future research and practical recommendations to improve institutional practices and policies, aiming to ensure that international students receive meaningful and effective support in alignment with the more ethical internationalization of higher education.[11]

Table 1.1: Previous Research and Research Originality

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No.	Researchers' Name, Year, and Source	Research Title	Equation	Difference	Originality
1.	Kim Tatyana, 2020, Thesis	Academic and Sociocultural Adjustment Experiences of International Students Studying in Kazakhstan.	Academic Adjustment. University support services	Emphasising more on sociocultural issues (gender related factors, bullying) Does not discuss	Focus on the Management Strategy of the Foreign Office in addressing Linguistic and Academic Adjustment

[11] N., Makino. Administrative Perspectives on international students' support: A comparative study of international office professionals at Swedish universities [Thesis]. Stockholm University 2024.

				management strategies specifically in academic and linguistic challenges.	Challenges among International Students.
2.	Rafika Mustaqimah Wardah, 2021, Thesis	Self-Adaptation and Culture Shock of Indonesian Postgraduate Students in European and American Countries. A Case Study of Intercultural Communication.	Both discuss the difficulties international students experience.	Focuses on cultural shock rather than institutional strategies. Does not study the linguistic academic support from the institution.	Closing the gap by understanding how Foreign Office management strategies help international students' linguistic and academic adjustment.
3.	Emihinola Taiwo Temitayo, 2020, Thesis	Patterns and Problems of International Students' Adjustment. Case Study of International Students at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia	Both focus on international students' obstacles, including the language and academics.	Emphasises self-adjustment rather than institutional management strategy. Examines students' individual experience rather than the intervention of the Foreign Office, addressing international students' faces.	Institution-centered viewpoint, examining not just students' individual coping mechanisms but also how institutions manage strategies not to prolong the language and academic hurdles of international students.
4.	Rima Amalia Eka Widya,	The Diplomacy	Connected to	Focuses on diplomacy	Exploring the

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	2021, Thesis	Strategy of Indonesian Higher Education to Increase the Number of International Students Mobility.	internationalization and Institutional Management	and mobility rather than problems with academic and language integration Discusses a broad policy, not institutional support systems for international students.	management strategies of the Foreign Office in addressing the linguistic and academic adjustment of international students.
5.	Nobuyuki Makino, 2024 Thesis	Administrative Perspectives on International Student Support. A Comparative Study of International Office Professionals at Swedish Universities.	Quite relevant since it also studies Institutional support for international students.	Focuses on the perspectives of the international office administration, not on the strategies specifically addressing the linguistic and academic adjustment. Does not emphasize the specific challenges concerning the linguistic and academic adjustment	Focusing on the Management Strategy of the Foreign Office in addressing Linguistic and Academic Adjustment Challenges among International Students.

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Based on Table 1.1 shows a comparative review of five previous studies, which is each of which offers a distinct viewpoint, and taken as a whole, it serves to highlight the research gap that the current study seeks to fill.

Based on the results of the review of the five previous studies, several insights regarding international students face complex challenges related to cultural, linguistic, academic, and institutional strategies. In the first study by Kim Tatyana (2020), concluded that language proficiency, cultural background, and personal factors have a significant impact on international students' adjustment. Additionally, faculty support and engagement in campus networks play a crucial role in facilitating smoother academic and sociocultural integration.

Moreover, the second study by Rakifa Mustaqimah Wardah (2021), in her study, identified phases of culture shock and stages of adaptation and challenges faced by the students when adjusting to new cultural settings.

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On the other hand, the third research by Emibinola Taiwo Temitayo (2020) examined self-adjustment patterns and issues among international students, identifying obstacles like language barriers, academic challenges, cultural differences, and social isolation in addition to coping strategies, including seeking help, improving language skills, and interacting with peers.

However, in the study of Rima Amalia Eka Widya (2021), the fourth study examined strategies of Indonesian higher education, but it emphasizes the diplomacy and mobility of international students. On the other hand, Makino's (2024) research study, which focuses on international student support in Swedish

Universities, emphasizes the administrative perspective on the various support approaches provided by universities in Sweden.

Overall, the previous research has discussed the challenges faced by international students, especially in relation to language, academic, social, and cultural adjustment. However, the majority of research does not directly link management strategies addressing linguistic and academic adjustment issues; instead, it focuses on students' individual adaptation process, self-experiences, or on general institutional policies relating to mobility or general support. This gap provides originality for the present study, which aims to explore how institutions might strategically manage and support international students in overcoming linguistic and academic adjustment, especially at Universitas KH Abdul Chalim, which hosts international students.

Therefore, the study on Management Strategy of the Foreign Office in Addressing Linguistic and Academic Adjustment Challenges among International Students in Universitas Abdul Chalim (UAC) fills the gap by emphasizing the institutional management viewpoint and intervention for successfully assisting international students in overcoming their linguistic and academic hurdles.

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F. Definition of Terms

This definition is necessary to understand and clarify the purpose of this discussion. To avoid confusion in understanding the study intended by the researcher. Some of the terms in this discussion are as follows:

Management Strategy – interventions, policies, and programs implemented by the institution to support students.

Foreign Office - is the institutional unit responsible for managing international academic affairs, including international student administration, academic coordination, and support services.

Linguistic challenges- refer to challenges or barriers of language use and comprehension that hinder successful social engagement, learning, or communication.

Academic adjustment- students' capacity to adjust in terms of academic standards.

International Students – students who study outside their country/ students studying abroad for a brief period.

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