

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Previous Study

To manage where the current research among literatures, the writer discussed some previous research on investigation the academic experience of international students: The first is Qing Gu et.al (2009) constructed a study with a title *Learning and Growing in A 'Foreign' Context: Intercultural Experiences of International Students*. The objectives of this research are to describe an investigation of the experiences of first-year international students during their undergraduate study at four UK higher education institutions. He found that personal, pedagogical and psychological factors are as important as organizational and social cultures in influencing students' adaptation, identity change and ultimate success. The research does not focus on the one nationality of International student to be investigated like this current study as well.

The second is Nikola Telbis et.al (University of North Dakota, 2014) constructed a study with a title *International Students' Confidence and Academic Success*. The study shows that foreign students are encountering difficulties in social adaptability, language barriers, academic ability, and financial need. Data shows that international students attending a mid-western university who scored high on confidence levels in completing their programs of study also scored high on their confidence of their resources. Analysis revealed that students who scored low in confidence for completing their programs of study also scored low on their confidence of these four aforementioned issues. The present study is not seeking the information and correlation between international students' confidence and their academic success, it tend to focus on the broader aspects of participant's academic experience.

The third is Gang Li et.al (University of Surrey, 2010) constructed a study with a title *Determinants of International Students' Academic Performance: A Comparison between Chinese and Other International Students*. The objectives of the research is to give an insight into international students' learning

experience by investigating the differences between Chinese and non Chinese cultural groups. The results suggest that as the predominant group, Chinese students display some distinctive characteristics. For example, Chinese students who studied abroad for the first time are likely to perform better than their compatriots who had studied overseas before. The current research is centered on one nationality of international student being explored and not comparing both different students' nationality learning experiences.

The fourth is Adekalu Samuel Olutokunbo, et.al (Universiti Putra Malaysia, 2013) constructed a study with a title *Academic Experience of International Students on Scholarships in Malaysian Universities: The Case of A Private University College*. The aim of this study is to investigate the academic experience of international students on scholarships in Malaysian Universities. The study revealed that, the scholars are generally satisfied and able to cope with the classroom teaching as well as academic huddles at Linton University College (LUC) while adapting to host challenges. The exploration has same object as the recent research, however it has different subject and carried out in other part of Asia.

The fifth is Teh-Yuan Wan, et.al (2000) constructed a study with a title *Academic Stress of International Students Attending U.S. Universities*. This study investigated factors associated with the academic stress experienced by international students attending graduate school in the United States. Results indicated that the primary determinants of the two types of appraisals differed. While self-perceived English-language skills and, to a lesser degree, cultural distance were the predictors of primary appraisal, self-perceived English-language, academic, and problem-solving skills and social support network were the main determinants of secondary appraisal. The research stressed on the psychological academic issue faced by international student, meanwhile the current research attempts to investigate the wider aspects of the academic issue, both physically and mentally.

The sixth is Felix Maringe, Jennifer Jenkins (University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2015) constructed a study with a

title *Stigma, tensions, and apprehension: The academic writing experience of international students*. The purpose of this paper is to uncover the real accounts of international students whose cultural and language backgrounds are often marginalized and considered, not as facilitators, but as barriers to academic writing in the western context of universities. The paper highlights the notions of stigma associated with their foreign writing conventions and how students experience tensions and apprehensions about their ability as they painfully negotiate the new academic writing conventions of the institution. The current research is more inclusive rather than this study, it is exploring the academic experience of International student in general covered many aspects.

The seventh is Xiaojiong Ding (Shanghai Normal University, China, 2016) constructed a study entitle *Exploring the Experience of International Students in China*. This study aims to know and explore the experience of international students in China. It is found that international students' has low levels of satisfaction with their study and living experiences show that China has not paid sufficient attention to improving its supply of higher education and other support services, which may threaten its sustainable growth in the international student market. The study has same object as the recent research, the separation situated on subject and location where the study taken place.

Another research was conducted by Narayan T. Ramachandran (Sultante of Oman University, 2016) entitled *Enhancing International Students' Experiences: An imperative agenda for universities in the UK*. This study examines the academic and other social problems that international students who pursue programs offered by the universities in the UK encounter. The study shows that international students have a smooth academic progression and a comfortable social life. They are satisfied with the educational program and system for international students. The current study is portraying as well as understanding the elucidation of the member towards the scholastic encounters, hopefully the outcome can be used as a additional information to enhance the services gave by the college.

The ninth, Jenny Lee, et.al (2016) constructed a study with the title *Neo-Racism and Neo-Nationalism Within East Asia: The Experiences of International Students in South Korea*. This research, based in South Korea, compares the experiences of international students from within and outside the Asian region and then examines Chinese international students' perceptions of discrimination. Utilizing the concept of neo-nationalism, survey findings revealed that Asian students reported greater difficulties and unfair treatment compared with students coming from Europe, North America, and other regions. The interviews further revealed anti-Chinese sentiments resulting in verbal aggression, challenges securing housing, discriminatory employment practices, and more. The racial differences are not main point to be highlighted in this present research related to student's academic experience.

The last is a study constructed by Liv Thorstenson (2016) with a title *The Academic Experiences of 6 Asian MBA International Students at the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management*. This study looked at the academic experiences of 6 Asian international students at the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management (CSOM). The findings indicated culture shock, language barriers, and education shock as variables affecting the adjustment of these students, and are congruent with previous studies in this area. Students desired more preparation for academic expectations as well as the social environment before and during their studies at CSOM. They also asserted the need for increased international interest at CSOM. The current research has different subject in investigating the participant's academic experiences, hence it also conducted in different places.

B. Underlying Theory

This section presents Academic Experience, Phenomenological and International Student.

1. Academic Experience

Academic experience consists of two words; academic and experience.

a. Notion of Academic

Academic can be defined as “anything relating to, or associated with an academy or school especially of higher learning. It is relating to performance in courses of study” (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2011). It can be understood that academic refers to higher educational institution that excessively concerned with intellectual matters and lacking experience of practical affairs.

Academic also define as students’ capabilities that certainly can be measured since science itself is definite and verifiable (Zamhari, 2016). Academic can be measured in the form of academic achievement. According to Atmoko (2008), academic achievements are abilities, skills and achievement obtained by someone as the result of learning process time by time and it is not due to the growth process. However, the term academic is used to refer everything related to the activity in campus which influences the academic practice of the participant.

b. Notion of Experience

Merriam Webster Dictionary (2011) defines experience as direct observation of or participation in events as a basis of knowledge. Experience is practical knowledge, skill, or practice derived from direct observation of or participation in events or in particular activity. According to Hemsley & Glass (2000), experience is the conscious events that make up an individual life or the events that make up the conscious past of a community or nation or humankind generally. Experience also defines as something personally encountered, undergone, or live through.

In other words, academic experience can be understood as a set of practical knowledge, skill, or practice own by someone that is derived from learning activity in educational institution such as college, academy and school.

2. Phenomenology

a. Phenomenology as Research Design

Phenomenology comes from the academic discipline of philosophy and psychology. It is based upon the work of the 20th century philosopher Edmund Husserl, which was then later developed by Heidegger. Generally, 'phenomenology' refers to a person's perception of the meaning of an event, as opposed to the event as it exists externally to (outside of) that person (www.health.herts.ac.uk). The focus of phenomenological research is what people experience in regard to some phenomenon or other and how they interpret those experiences.

A phenomenological research study is a study that attempts to understand people's perceptions, perspectives and understandings of a particular situation or phenomenon (Van Manen, 1990). Traditionally, a phenomenological research study could not be used to make or create some generalizations of phenomenon by looking at the participant's perspective point of view.

Stan Lester (2000:1) stated that the purpose of the phenomenological approach is to illuminate the specific, to identify phenomena through how they are perceived by the doer in a situation. In the human sphere this normally translates into gathering 'deep' information and perceptions through inductive, qualitative methods such as interviews, discussions and participant observation, and representing it from the perspective of the research participant(s).

Phenomenology is concerned with the study of experience from the perspective of the individual, 'bracketing' taken-for-granted assumptions and usual ways of perceiving (Stan Lester, 2000:1). It concerns on the

importance of personal perspective and interpretation of the participant towards certain condition or phenomenon being investigated.

The purpose of phenomenological study was to construct a comprehensive set of participants' descriptions which could portray a phenomenon and explained its relationship with individuals in that particular context (Moustakas, 1994). Accordingly, the type of data expected to answer the research question is not only the story of the experiences but also the meaning and interpretations of the experiences being investigated. Therefore, a co-construction process and interpretations were two important components of the overall data analysis process. The description of the participant lived experiences is identified according to the key themes emerged and organized around some explicative themes. These themes represent the participant interpretation towards phenomenon being investigated.

b. Explicative Theme

Lived experience is the starting point and end point of phenomenological research (Van Manen, 1990). Hence, the participant's lived experiences become the object of this study that could be gathered via interview, participant observation and discussion. The information which is not relevant with the phenomenon being investigated was removed simultaneously. After being familiar with the data in the form of written transcript of the participant's story, the researcher starts isolating the Natural Meaning Unit (NMU). The data collected was separated by listing it in numbering in order to cross the reference of each theme.

The researcher tries to get a sense and make preliminary analysis of themes emerged from the data. The links between emerged themes then identified and clustered as a group of themes. Having obtained the tentative themes, member checking was done by returning the preliminary analysis to the participant to discuss about the tentative themes emerged to check the participant's perspective or even alternatives themes. By

applying hermeneutic phenomenology, the researcher and participant co-construct the description and interpretation of the participant's experiences to understand meanings the participant attribute to his experiences and to identify the thematic structure of those experiences (Cresswell, 2007). The researcher opens up the study by sharing and discussing with other researcher of the coding and thematizing data process included the subsequent interpretation. This is done in order to seek alternative interpretation and to strengthen the claims made by the researcher in the study. Having confirmed the tentative theme, the researcher established explicative themes.

Explicative themes was unique features of phenomenological research design that can be understood as the themes which are emerged frequently from the process of the data coding and thematizing that represent the participant's lived experience. It can be used as one of distinguishing predominant features in phenomenological research design in place of other design or methodology.

3. International Student

The word student comes from Latin "*studēns*" means diligent. According to Collins' dictionary (2000), a student is a person who is studying at a university or college or a person following a course of study in educational institution. It can also be understood as someone who is interested of studying a particular subject and spends time learning about it.

In this study, the researcher wants to investigate the academic experience of international student, in this case is Palestine student studying in Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta.

The definition of "international student" varies in each country in accordance to their own national education system. According to UNESCO in University World News (2009), an international student defined as an individual who is enrolled for credit at an accredited higher education institution in the certain country on a temporary visa, and who is not an

immigrant or an undocumented immigrant, or a refugee. International students are those who travel to a country different from their own for the purpose of tertiary study (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2011). Hence, international student can be broadly defined as a student or individual crossing borders for the specific purpose of studying, and the term 'foreign student' for non-citizens enrolled at an institution of education outside their home country, but who have not necessarily crossed a border to study.