

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Indonesia is the world's largest archipelago with more than 17,000 islands and a nation that plays a significant role in the global diplomacy scene. Indonesia is located in a geostrategic position between two oceans which are the Indian and Pacific Ocean, and also two continents which are the Asian and Australia continent. Indonesia's location makes it an important crossing point for international trade routes and diplomacy. Indonesia diplomatic priorities, including economic diplomacy, language proficiency, and public diplomacy, underscore its efforts to enhance international cooperation (Kemlu, 2024). Indonesia has consistently aimed to enhance its multilateral diplomacy by actively engaging in international organizations such as the G20, ASEAN, and United Nations. Indonesia has been conducting diplomacy to gain international recognition as a sovereign state, especially during the country's process to gain independence and in the face of various post-independence political and economic challenges. Since gaining its independence, Indonesia has chosen a "free and active" policy that aims to preserve its sovereignty and territorial integrity while developing cooperative relationships that will benefit the whole region. This policy promotes national growth and the welfare of Indonesia's citizens in addition to strengthening Indonesia's position on the global stage.

Diplomacy is one way to achieve national interests. Through soft power diplomacy, especially in the field of education and culture, national interests in strengthening Indonesia's credibility abroad and improving human resources can be achieved. Soft power, as defined by Joseph Nye, is the ability to shape the preferences of others through attraction and persuasion rather than coercion or payment. It relies on intangible assets such as culture, values, and policies to increase a country's influence on the global stage (Nye, 2008). One of Indonesia's strategies to strengthen its soft power diplomacy is with Public Diplomacy. Public diplomacy is the practice of engaging with foreign publics to promote a country's interests, values, and culture (Trisni & Putri, 2023). It often utilizes soft power tools to enhance a nation's image and reputation abroad (ÇİÇEK, 2022). Public diplomacy can reinforce soft power.

In an increasingly connected era of globalization, international student mobility has become one of the key aspects of public diplomacy, playing an important role in expanding the network of relations between nations and promoting cross-cultural understanding. International student mobility is the act of students from one country deciding to pursue higher education in a different country. Public diplomacy aims to influence foreign audiences through cultural, educational, and informational activities. Hosting international students demonstrates a country's openness, diversity, and attractiveness as a study destination, enhancing its soft power and improving its international image (Byrne & Hall, 2013).

International student mobility is influenced by various factors, including the demand for higher education, global power balances, and government policies promoting international education for quality and quantity purposes (Bista et al., 2018). International student mobility has significant effects that extend beyond the host countries, since it has the potential to foster the internationalization of higher education and facilitate the establishment of global relations. The mobility of international students has been viewed as one of the indicators of campus diversity, internationalization, and a prime source to boost the revenue of the institution of higher education in major destinations (Bista et al., 2018).

In Indonesia, to support Indonesian students to achieve higher education, several international student mobility exchange programs have already been implemented to support the internalization of higher education. As of 2019, roughly 60,000 Indonesian students studied abroad, with the top destinations being Australia, Malaysia, the US, Japan, and the UK (Fidhiza Purisma, 2024). This mobility can encompass various levels of education, including undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate studies, as well as short-term exchange programs and research collaborations.

In 1974, Indonesian government offered a one-year non-degree scholarship to citizens of countries that have diplomatic relations with Indonesia called The Darmasiswa program. The program aims to promote interest in the Indonesian language (Bahasa Indonesia) and culture among international students. The Darmasiswa program is organized by Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As of 2019, the program has over 579 participants from 101 countries. Interest has grown significantly since the 1970s. The number shows that the interest of international students to participate in this program keeps increasing year by year.

In 2003, the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs came up with the Indonesian Arts and Culture Scholarship (BSBI) to introduce Indonesian arts and culture to youth from abroad. The aim is to broaden understanding of Indonesia and strengthen long-term cultural diplomacy. This program is considered a form of Indonesia's cultural diplomacy that aims to strengthen relations between nations through cultural and knowledge exchange (Kemlu, 2022). This scholarship is held annually, with participants consisting of young people from various countries who take part in learning programs about Indonesian arts, culture, and language.

Other than two programs that is provided by Indonesia governments to gain interest of international students to go and learn Indonesia culture in Indonesia, public and private universities in Indonesia opportunities for international student mobility exchange programs, catering to both regular and international students. These programs offer the opportunity for students to earn transferable credits to their respective home universities upon completion of the program. Typically, students from regular academic programs have the option to participate in international mobility exchange programs, although it is not obligatory. Additionally, it is mandatory for students participating in international programs at these universities to complete one or two semesters abroad at host partner universities. The majority of these programs are financed through self-funding, although with occasional tuition waivers provided by the host-partner universities.

The exchange programs that have been mentioned, the Darmasiswa program and BSBI program, are all programs aimed for foreigners to study in Indonesia and learn about Indonesia culture. In the year 2021, the Indonesian government has shown its commitment to provide Indonesian undergraduate students with the necessary abilities and expertise for their future professional endeavors through the establishment of the first broad, fully financed international mobility exchange program scholarship, known as the Indonesia International Student Mobility Award (IISMA).

Indonesia International Student Mobility Award (IISMA) is a part of the Merdeka Campus initiative facilitated by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) and the Indonesia Endowment Funds for Education (LPDP), Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is also involved in providing support and protection to IISMA students while they are abroad. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports IISMA as an educational diplomacy tool that strengthens bilateral relations between Indonesia and other countries.

As of 2023, the program has provided sponsorship to around 2750 undergraduate students from Indonesia, enabling them to participate in a semester-long study abroad program at various universities across diverse global areas. The funding allocation for the IISMA program covers various aspects that are essential to ensure students' participation in this international mobility program runs smoothly and effectively. IISMA funds are specifically allocated to cover the various needs of IISMA awardees during the program, including registration and tuition fees at the host university, housing allowance and living expenses, as well as airfare and visas.

The universities provided by IISMA are the top universities in the top 100 of the 2022 University QS World Ranking, thereby affording Indonesian students the opportunity to engage in educational pursuits at globally renowned institutions. According to the Indonesian Minister of Education, as stated on the official IISMA website, the primary goal of the program is to equip competent Indonesian students with practical experience, knowledge, and skills necessary for their future careers. The Minister believes that studying abroad will enhance their most valuable skills for the future job market.

IISMA aligns with Indonesia's broader public diplomacy goals. By enabling students to study abroad, gain new knowledge and skills, and build international networks, the program helps cultivate Indonesia's soft power. Nizam, Acting Director General of Higher Education, Research and Technology mentioned that IISMA awardees have an important role as Indonesia ambassadors who introduce the noble cultural values of the nation in addition to getting the opportunity to study at various top universities (Doddy, 2023). Indonesia governments especially asked the awardees to serve as cultural ambassadors during their time overseas, promoting Indonesia's image as a country where Islam, democracy, and modernity can thrive together through challenges that must be done during their time abroad called the IISMA Challenges.

Within their limited time abroad, IISMA Challenges designed to fosters people-to-people ties and emotional closeness that can improve perceptions of Indonesia abroad and support its foreign policy objectives in the long run. Even with the time restriction of IISMA program which is only four until

five months abroad, IISMA awardees are given the same message to be delivered to the global stage as Indonesia ambassador which makes IISMA different from the previous student mobility programs that have been held by Indonesia governments before IISMA, such as the LPDP scholarship for master's program. The international exposure and cross-cultural understanding gained through IISMA is seen as key to developing the mindset and skills needed to succeed in an interconnected world.

The use of educational and cultural components also speaks to the realization of the concept of soft power and public diplomacy that has a long-term impact. IISMA's position for Indonesia is not only about building a positive image, but also about building credibility and reputation. This exemplifies how public diplomacy has expanded beyond government-to-government relations to include exchanges that positively shape a country's international reputation over time. In the context of foreign policy and international relations, the educational and cultural exchange relationship is the "human side" because it contributes in the form of communication, and focuses on people, their ideas, values, understanding, attitudes, skills, and knowledge (Kristiana & Benito, 2023).

Nye (2008) stated that the third dimension of public diplomacy is the development of lasting relationships with important individuals over the years through scholarships, student exchange training, seminars, conferences, and media channels. Therefore, IISMA is an appropriate object to analyze how Indonesia implements the instruments of its public diplomacy with educational diplomacy and cultural diplomacy by sending Indonesia students to international stages to promote Indonesia.

1.2. Research Question

Based on the background of the problems described above, the main research issues can be formulated as follows: "*How does the Indonesian government use IISMA as a Public Diplomacy instrument?*"

1.3. Theoretical Framework

1.3.1. Public Diplomacy

International Relations is defined as the study of the relations and interactions between countries, which also discusses the activities and policies of governments, non-governmental organizations, and multinational companies (Jackson et al., 2018). In the development of the dynamics of international relations, the use of power of each country does not only rely on hard power which is very synonymous with coercion in the form of threats. The other power that is often increasingly developed and relied upon is soft power. According to Joseph Nye, soft power itself can be defined as the capacity to get what one wants through persuasion or attraction to others rather than through coercion (Nye, 2008).

Soft power relies on the ability to influence and attract others, so the activities created to achieve soft power must be activities that can provide attraction and appeal to the target. This requires a deep understanding of the target, what they like and what they find attractive. Nye argues that exchange programs are much more effective in achieving this goal than broadcasting, which tends to be more

one-way (Nye, 2008). To achieve this appeal, there are resources that, if used properly, that can generate soft power. Public diplomacy can reinforce soft power. Initiatives for public diplomacy, such as educational exchanges and cultural exchanges, help project a positive image of a nation, enhancing its soft power. Kim (2017) stated that public diplomacy is aimed at foreign publics and thus enhances the soft power of a nation.

Public diplomacy is a crucial aspect of international relations, encompassing government-sponsored efforts aimed at engaging foreign publics directly. It involves strategic communication, cultural exchanges, and engagement initiatives to shape perceptions, build relationships, and advance national interests. Through various channels such as media, cultural events, educational programs, and digital platforms, public diplomacy seeks to influence foreign audiences, promote understanding, and foster cooperation. Public diplomacy recognizes the significance of public opinion in shaping foreign policy. It involves understanding and influencing perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs of foreign publics through strategic communication (Eksi, n.d.).

Gilboa (2008) stated that public diplomacy is presented as an official policy translating soft power resources into action. The significance that Gilboa (2008) draws from this argument is that public diplomacy is an official policy of activities that package soft power resources real into action. The achievement and promotion of soft power is accommodated through official policy, where public diplomacy is seen as an official state policy that provides direction to mobilize soft power resources into activities that can produce soft power.

The five types of actions associated with public diplomacy are listening, advocacy, cultural diplomacy, international exchanges where the emphasis is on educational and cultural exchanges and international broadcasting (Cull, 2008). Listening involves understanding foreign audiences' perspectives and concerns, while advocacy entails promoting a country's policies, values, and culture abroad. Cultural diplomacy emphasizes using cultural assets to build relationships and understanding between nations, while exchange diplomacy facilitates direct person-to-person interactions through programs like student exchanges. Lastly, international broadcasting disseminates a country's perspectives and information through media channels to international audiences, aiming to influence opinions and perceptions.

Cull (2009) argues that in this new public diplomacy, the state is no longer the sole actor in public diplomacy; there are international organizations, state-appointed groups and transnational corporations that can also be actors in public diplomacy. The player of public diplomacy in Indonesia primarily refers to the Indonesian government, specifically the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This ministry is responsible for formulating and executing Indonesia's foreign policy and public diplomacy initiatives. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs works to promote Indonesia's interests abroad, engage with international partners, and enhance the country's image on the global stage. This includes various activities such as cultural exchanges, educational programs, and diplomatic missions aimed at fostering positive relations with other countries (Huijgh, 2016).

Meanwhile d'Hooghe (2015) explains that actors other than the state that can be involved in the implementation of public diplomacy today can be grouped into five groups, first is the academic world which includes academics from universities and schools, research institutions, think tanks and student organizations. The second are Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and lobby groups at the national and international levels: advocacy groups. The third is business, namely representatives from business organizations, large companies and chambers of commerce. The fourth are Cultural Organizations such as museums, galleries, theaters, cultural institutions, artists and festivals. The fifth are citizens as in people involved in various exchange organizations and friendship associations, diasporas, and individual citizens.

International student mobility is closely related to public diplomacy as part of educational diplomacy and cultural diplomacy. By engaging in active academic exchange, students serve as effective representatives of their respective countries, showcasing cultural values, knowledge, and innovations that strengthen a nation's positive image on the international stage. Educational diplomacy, a subset of public diplomacy, uses academic exchanges to build relationships between nations. International student mobility programs serve as diplomatic tools, promoting collaboration and understanding between countries (Kristiana & Benito, 2023).

1.4. Hypothesis

The writer chooses the formulation of the problem and discusses the theory that will be applied in this research through a description of the problem's background. This led the author to form the hypothesis that is:

1. Indonesia government making sure IISMA scholarship awardees are able to become the face of Indonesia abroad through a rigorous selection process.
2. Indonesia government giving out message that must be carry out by IISMA awardees while studying in their destination country to promote Indonesia abroad.
3. Indonesia government using IISMA as a strategic media to enhance Indonesia public diplomacy through IISMA Challenges.

1.5. Research Methods

This study uses descriptive qualitative research methods. Qualitative descriptive research is a research that uses a pattern of describing the state of empirical facts accompanied by relevant arguments. Then, the results of the description are continued with an analysis to draw analytical conclusions. Qualitative methods follow research procedures that produce descriptive data in the form of written words from observed behavior.

Based on the research method used, which is qualitative, this research uses two collection techniques, namely literature study and interviews. The first technique is literature study, will be used to obtain primary data and secondary data. Primary data comes from official documents such as those published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemdikbudristek) on the

official page of the Indonesia International Student Mobility Award (IISMA), direct data in the form of press releases, official agreements related to the IISMA program and interviews.

As for the secondary data, it is obtained from the use of the internet which will be sourced from articles published in journals, research papers, opinions from experts and published in news articles. Then the second technique is interviews will be carried out by interviewing three IISMA awardees from University of Pécs in Hungary, Phoenix Academy in Australia, and Korea University in Korea. To gather more information, interview with two IISMA executives also will be carried out.

1.6. Scope of Research

The scope and reach of this research are regarding Indonesia Public Diplomacy and how the Indonesia International Student Mobility Award (IISMA) can act as an instrument for Indonesia Public Diplomacy using the data from the year IISMA was formed in 2021 until now.

1.7. Writing Systematics

In order to guide and ensure that the formulation of the problem in this study is answered, the author divides the discussion into four different chapters. Each chapter will have its own discussion, but all are interconnected and constructive so that they can answer the questions contained in the problem formulation in this study. The first chapter will describe the general description and background of this writing, problem formulation, theoretical framework, hypothesis, research methodology, scope of research, research methodology, and writing systematics that will be applied to this research.

In chapter two, the author will discuss how Indonesia implements its public diplomacy practices. This chapter will discuss the efforts made by the Indonesian government through the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the main actor who plays a big role in Indonesia's public diplomacy. This chapter will also discuss how education diplomacy and cultural diplomacy is a strategy for the implementation of Indonesia public diplomacy and in its implementation, it involved many actors beyond the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology as well as the Ministry of Finance in giving scholarship funding.

Chapter three will discuss how IISMA can act as Indonesia's public diplomacy instrument. This chapter will include the Indonesian government efforts in sending the chosen Indonesian undergraduate students through this program to promote Indonesia and practice public diplomacy by giving the IISMA awardees challenges to do in the representative host university. IISMA awardees is expected to be a micro-representative of Indonesia in international stage as well building a positive image of Indonesia through mass media. The last chapter, which is chapter four, will contain the overall conclusion of this study and suggestion for the next study.