

Students' Perceptions of the impacts of Short Diplomatic Course 2023: An Interpretive Phenomenology on Diplomatic Academic Experience, Personal Development and Global Perspective

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Abstract

Purpose of this research was to examine students' perception of international relation on the impact of short diplomatic course program 2023 with the topic "countries efforts in combating global warming" as part of diplomatic course that offers essential training, knowledge, and skills for students. The participants were international relation students of Potensi Utama University. Research design used interpretative phenomenological analysis. Data collection was conducted using semi-structured interviews to explore informants' views on their experiences to derive key themes from their experiences related to this research. The research analysis resulted in three main themes: academic materials and experience, personal development and global perspective. Some of the themes show that the impact of short diplomatic course program 2023 is multifaceted. The educational topics of the program substantially focused on the global issues of "countries efforts in combating global warming". The research also relied heavily on students' self-reported answers. Findings can be used as a conceptual tool for the design and evaluation of new and existing programmes. In addition, the three main themes that emerged from this research are useful as prompts for students' self-reflection on their own academic experiences and personal development. In short, the students enjoyed learning and participating in short diplomatic course which automatically improved their diplomacy academic experience, personal development, global perspective.

Keywords: *short diplomatic course 2023; interpretative phenomenological analysis, impact of academic experience, personal development, global perspective*

1. Introduction

The main principle of the new sustainable development or known as SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) is to leave no one behind. One of the targets carried out by SDGs to achieve the success of the SDGs program is to improve quality education related to relevant skills. The skills are the development of cognitive and non-cognitive high-level skills such as communication skills, teamwork skills, problem solving and other skills. To support this, Universitas Potensi Utama through the International Relations department conducted short diplomatic course 2023 activities in achieving the SDGs goal of creating a generation that is proficient in communication skills, teamwork skills, problem solving, etc (Amalia et al., 2021).

The Short Diplomatic Course 2023 is an effort specifically created to offer a concise thorough introduction to face the complexities of diplomatic procedures. The purpose of this research was to explore students' perceptions the impacts of brief diplomatic courses on students' diplomatic academic experiences, personal development, and global viewpoints. In short, this research explores the experiences of students who participated in short diplomatic courses and how these courses have changed their perspective of diplomacy, intercultural communication, and personal growth by using an interpretative phenomenological approach (Rijal, 2021).

Additionally, a globalization era is characterized by rapidly changing geopolitical environments. The need for proficient and professional diplomats in international relations become most importance. In increasingly linked world, there is a growing demand for professionals to posse a deep grasp of diplomatic processes and a sophisticated global perspective. In response to this crucial need, educational institutions have implemented specialized programs and courses to equip students with the necessary skills for the complexities of international diplomacy (Juliana, 2019). One of the courses that International Relations Department of Potensi Utama University held in August was The Short Diplomatic Course 2023 (Figus, 2018).

In this time, diplomatic education plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between nations, cultures, and individuals within the dynamic order of world affairs. The significance of Diplomatic education can be accomplished by the Short Diplomatic Course 2023, which serves as a facilitator for developing students' necessary abilities and viewpoints to effectively navigate the intricate realm of global affairs. To achieve this, the research integrated the perspectives of distinguished diplomatic scholars, whose theories serve as the theoretical underpinning for this investigation. Joseph Nye's notion of soft skill power is highly influential in modern

diplomacy. Nye argues that the capacity to allure and sway people through cultural appeal and persuasion is an essential aspect of successful diplomacy. The research investigated how the Short Diplomatic Course 2023 enhances soft skills power among students; how these abilities influence diplomatic academic experiences and promote a proactive attitude to global participation (Wallace, 2023).

Diplomatic principles and practices have a significant impact on individuals' knowledge of international affairs. This knowledge background is the foundation upon on the concept of diplomatic academic experience built. Henry Kissinger underlined the need of academic training in diplomacy to create future leaders and fostering a profound understanding of the challenges that are confronting the world today (Juliana, 2020). Course in diplomatic relations may bring about personal growth in individuals. The work of Joseph Nye extensively explores the idea of "soft power" and the ways in which education and cultural interchange may affect the personal and professional development of an individual (Maass, 2023).

The concept of a global viewpoint is also fundamental to the research of diplomacy. Morgenthau (2012) emphasized the necessity of developing a comprehensive grasp of the dynamics of international relations. The

greater goal of developing global perspective and cross-cultural understanding that got from short diplomatic courses. This outcome can be accomplished by exploring the insights of students joined in Short Diplomatic Course 2023 (Harrison, 2009). In other words, the research contributes to the continuing discussion on the role that education plays in forming future diplomats and global insight by capturing the rich and varied experiences of participants through the use of an interpretative phenomenological approach (Rijal et al., 2021).

By exploring the theoretical concepts by Hans Morgenthau and Kenneth Waltz, it is gained a clearer understanding of the power dynamics that exist within international relations (Wolf, 2022). The Short Diplomatic Course 2023 provided students with an opportunity to explore various geopolitical scenarios, allowing them to gain a distinct perspective on the complexities of power dynamics and interests within diplomatic discussions (Ryniejska – Kiełdanowicz, 2009). Moreover, the historical records of diplomatic thought based on the sagacity of Henry Kissinger, whose focus on the skill of negotiation and statecraft highlights the complexity of diplomacy (Cull, 2020). The Short Diplomatic Course 2023 is designed to compress Kissinger's thoughts into a concise framework. It emphasizes experiential

learning, pushing students to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world situations that understand how diplomatic abilities evolve outside of the classroom (Sakurai, 2019).

The research was conducted a thorough and exceptional investigation into how the course influences students' diplomatic academic experiences, personal development, and the development of a sophisticated global perspective. Therefore, this research aims to make a valuable contribution to both the academic discussion on diplomatic education and the development of future leaders who are skilled in navigating the complex network of international relations (Ashinova, 2020).

2. METHODS

The research design used interpretive phenomenological analysis, a methodology that explore to comprehend participants' perspectives on their lived reality and extract significant themes from their experiences. In order to examine the students' perspectives on the effects of the courses, the researcher initially analyzed the transcripts and identified specific text parts that reflected the students' impressions of the short diplomatic course consequences. The short diplomatic courses were provided to undergraduate students of the International Relation Department at Potensi Utama university as a means of promoting sustainable development and improving global

competency and the quality of diplomatic education. This course offers a concise diplomatic curriculum that aligns with the university's objective to enhance the quality of diplomatic education for fourth and sixth-year students. It focuses on various diplomatic topics related to "countries' efforts in combating global warming". The primary objective of the short diplomatic course is to foster a global mindset among students and enhance their understanding of many global subjects from a wide range of viewpoints. The course focuses on providing opportunities for students to engage with their counterparts in different nations (Creswell, 2016).

The participants in this study were students from the international relations department at Potensi Utama University. The researcher sent an invitation to students who indicated their interest in participating in research interviews through a post-course survey conducted subsequent to the completion of the brief diplomatic course. Approximately 100 individuals completed the questionnaires and expressed their interest in engaging in research interviews. The researcher elucidated the characteristics of the students in order to explicate the objectives, methodologies, and ethical considerations associated with their involvement. In the end, a total of 5 students were interviewed to validate key thematic statement. The topics of

the semi-structured interviews centred around the key thematic statement such as preparation, experiences, self-development, future benefit after the diplomatic course take. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbally. Interviews were conducted in English and lasted between 30 and 60 min. The researcher explored the key themes of how the corresponding courses impacted the participants (Cresswell, 2016).

The study design was guided by interpretive phenomenological analysis, a methodology that seeks to comprehend participants' perspectives on their lived reality and extract significant themes from their experiences. In order to examine the students' perspectives on the effects of the courses, the researcher initially reviewed the transcripts and identified specific text parts that reflected the students' impressions of the consequences. The researcher devised an initial exploratory coding method to identify and categorize relevant topics. Subsequently, the researcher engaged in more meticulous examinations to enhance the coding system, while revisiting the audio recordings. This process facilitated the capturing of subtle nuances in the experiences. The interview's sub-themes were examined. Following the analysis, the researcher employed the identified major themes and concentrated on the outcome of text segments associated with each topic simultaneously in

order to maintain coherence. Ultimately, the researcher classified and formulated a conclusive theme. The researcher interviewed 5 students in achieving key theme (Padilla, 2015).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Four major themes arose from the analysis of students' reflections about the impacts of participating in the courses: diplomatic academic experience, personal development and global perspective. All students perceived that the experiences of short diplomatic course 2023 influenced their personal development and global perspectives. Most students talked about their development of soft skills and diplomatic knowledge. The statements were coded with multiple themes, which described the multifaceted nature of impacts of the short diplomatic course 2023.

Theme 1: Academic Experience

Students appreciated opportunities to enrich their academic experience, that is, skills and knowledges that can be applied across several topic subjects and settings. They emphasized several prospects for foreign language contact and were placed to speak with individuals from diverse nations as diplomats.

Student A and **Student B** said that participating short diplomatic course enhanced

their diplomatic skills and knowledges. It which was typical with the statement of

Student A:

“My experience in the diplomatic course has been incredibly enriching. Throughout the course, I gained a deep understanding of international relations, negotiation strategies, and the complexities of diplomatic engagements. The course provided valuable insights into the importance of effective communication, cultural sensitivity, and the role of diplomacy in resolving conflicts and promoting cooperation among nations.”

Then **Student B** also strengthened student A’ statement that short diplomatic course improved her diplomatic knowledge. **Student B** said that:

“My overall experience of the diplomatic course was very positive for me. I learned a lot about the complexities of international relations and gained practical skills that will be useful in my future career. This highlights the importance of taking courses that provide practical skills and knowledge that can be applied in real-world situations.”

Next, **Student C** was in line with student B, she stated:

“It had a significant impact on me personally because in this session my mindset became growing when the alliance countries tried to unite their ideas based on their country's

interests to a common goal. As countries discuss each other my thinking becomes wider and this gives me a new view that the more we want to know about something, the wider our thinking is.”

The second major topic of the theme was negotiating skills. **Student D and Student E** similarly said they learned how to negotiate in a coherent presentation with others through exchanging ideas, mutually adjusting their arguments and constructing discussions together. **Student D and E** learned from some negotiation skills with other students from various nations and backgrounds. **Student D and E** had similar point of view with the following statements:

Student D stated, “I felt happy and challenged when I took part in the Diplomatic Course activities. I felt these two things because in this activity I was able to practice my speaking skills in English and hone my skills in negotiating in international forums.”

Student E was in line with “When I took the Diplomacy Course, I felt challenged. Interaction between students who have their own student backgrounds according to their country. Interaction between students is quite good, they try their best to characterize it the position of their country, there are those who have a distinctive way of diplomacy to achieve their country's goals All students try

their best to become a diplomat of their respective countries. Here my learning experience is interesting because I can know how to do diplomacy well and work in teams between countries that have the same vision and mission.”

From all students’ statement can be concluded that short diplomatic course 2023 had a significant impact on students’ diplomacy knowledges and negotiating skills. All students could discuss each other about their international relation perspective. Students could **interact with fellow students from diverse backgrounds, this experience was incredibly valuable for the students. It allowed them to see issues from different perspectives and learn different cultural norms and values. This highlights the importance of diversity and inclusion in any field, especially in diplomacy and international relations.**

Theme 2: Personal Development

Personal development theme refers to the influence on students’ characteristics and personalities including personal growth, self-confidence, self-understanding, public speaking attitudes, personal relationships, motivation for learning and development. The most frequently mentioned topic was on Short

diplomatic courses 2023 for personal development and career trajectory.

Student B stated, “Completing the diplomatic course has solidified the student's career aspirations in the field of diplomacy or international relations. This highlights the importance of taking courses that align with one's career aspirations. The course contributed to the student's personal growth by increasing their self-confidence and cross-cultural awareness. I feel more prepared to work with people from different backgrounds and perspectives. Personal growth is essential for anyone looking to advance their career, and it is especially crucial in diplomacy and international relations.

Student C also had similar point of view that, “This diplomatic course will definitely influence and complement my career in diplomacy or international relations because I have learned how to conduct such diplomatic activities, so it opens up my opportunity to more boldly plunge into other international forums to gain more experience and broad relations in the field of diplomacy and international relations. Things that contributed to my personal growth was Confidence in public speaking and Cross-cultural understanding through meetings between national representatives.”

Student D was in line with student C, “I think the Diplomatic Course activities can influence and complement my career in the field of diplomacy, because by participating in the Diplomatic Course activities I can apply my communication skills in public and I can build a network with other delegations to exchange ideas, this can help me in seeking future career opportunities in the diplomatic field. the Diplomatic Course's contribution is in developing self-confidence and cultural awareness through leadership and teamwork skills, as well as appreciating the cultural differences of different countries. In the Diplomatic Course I try to improve my ability to present my ideas by becoming a delegate from the country I represent.

From all students' statement can be concluded that short diplomatic course 2023 contribute **for anyone interested in pursuing a career in diplomacy or international relations. The course provides practical skills, expands knowledge of international relations, and provides networking opportunities with professionals in the field. It also contributes to personal growth by increasing self-confidence and cross-cultural awareness. Overall, the diplomatic course seems to be a valuable investment for anyone looking to advance their career in diplomacy or international relations.**

Theme 3: Global perspective

The students described their experiences of acquiring new perspectives related to different people and cultures. They learned different social norms, cultural traditions and thought patterns as well as a novel perspective of various culture. And for example, depicted an experience as a delegate representing Japan and Russian Diplomats.

Student D said that,

“I’m a delegate representing Japan with the issue of global warming, I joined an alliance consisting of China, Russia, India, South Korea and Saudi Arabia. The strategy that I describe for the country I represent is: Greenhouse Gas reduction strategy: 1. Solar installations 2. Green Growth Strategy 3. Carbon Recycling Technology.” Then she stated, “The Diplomatic Course can improve my understanding of global dynamics and theories of International Relations through the issues discussed through the topics raised. For example, this year's Diplomatic Course discusses the issue of Global Warming. This makes the delegates representing their respective countries look for their country's position based on the issues raised, the country's strategy, and how the delegation provides its arguments for the efforts made by the country being represented. With this, each delegation increases their knowledge about global dynamics and the views of each country on the issues discussed.”

Student B was in line with her statement,

“With the course enhanced the student's understanding of global dynamics by providing a framework for analysing international events and trends. This is essential for anyone working in diplomacy or international relations, as it helps to identify patterns and predict future events. I found realism and constructivism to be particularly insightful during the course. Realism and constructivism are two important theoretical perspectives in international relations, and understanding them is crucial for anyone working in the field.”

Student C had similar perspective,

“This activity increases my understanding of this global dynamic. Examples of case studies that helped me understand the diplomatic concept of Russia's Strategy to Deal with Global Warming, the first thing we did was an opening speech by introducing the Russian country by general speaker list in the diplomacy forum, then mentioning the problems of what is happening in Russia as a result of global warming and some of the policies Russia has tried in dealing with the global warmer case. Then the second thing to do is the moderated caucus session, is the submission of a motion that the Russian state wants to discuss in the diplomatic forum, then the third thing that is done is the unmoderated Caucus session in which Russia can leave its seat and look for another

country that has the same vision as Russia, after getting a country with a similar vision then Russia will form a block or alliance”

From all above statements can be described that in the Diplomatic Course activities, the diplomatic concept in the issue of global warming involves efforts to reach agreements and joint solutions between the countries involved. Diplomacy can be used to promote international cooperation in overcoming the effects of global warming, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, developing green technologies, and increasing access to renewable energy resources. In the Diplomatic Course, delegates from various countries that participated in a United Nations (UN) simulation session to discuss global issues, including global warming. During the session, delegates can use diplomatic strategies to influence other countries and reach mutually beneficial agreements. The diplomatic concept in the issue of global warming in the Diplomatic Course also involves efforts to maintain good diplomatic relations between the countries involved. Diplomacy can help avoid conflict and enhance international cooperation in dealing with complex global challenges such as global warming.

The theory of international relations that is relevant to the issue of global warming is the theory of international cooperation. This

theory argues that countries can work together in overcoming global problems such as global warming through international cooperation and coordination. This theory also emphasizes the importance of diplomacy in reaching mutual agreements and solutions between the countries involved. Diplomacy can help overcome differences in views and interests between countries, so that mutually beneficial agreements can be reached. In addition, this theory also emphasizes the importance of establishing international institutions that can facilitate cooperation and coordination between countries in overcoming global problems such as global warming. An example is the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) which aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions globally. In the context of the Diplomatic Course, international cooperation theory can be applied in an effort to reach mutual agreements and solutions between delegates from various countries involved in the UN session simulation. Delegations can use diplomacy strategies and work together in finding mutually beneficial solutions to address the problem of global warming.

4. CONCLUSION

This research aimed to explore students' perceptions of the impact of a short diplomatic course program on combating global warming. The findings revealed three main themes: academic materials and experience, personal development, and global perspective. The program's educational focus on global issues was significant. The findings can be used as a conceptual tool for designing and evaluating new and existing programs. The three main themes also serve as prompts for students to reflect on their academic experiences and personal development. In conclusion, the students enjoyed the program, which improved their diplomacy academic experience, personal development, and global perspective.

The Short Diplomatic Course 2023 is a dynamic learning environment that encourages active engagement and reflective practice among students. It encourages students to seek diverse perspectives and opinions, enhancing their understanding of diplomatic concepts and personal development. The course also emphasizes the practical application of soft skills, such as communication, negotiation, and cultural awareness, in both academic and personal life. Feedback is provided to ensure continuous improvement and alignment with student needs. Course facilitators should foster interactive learning, emphasize soft skills, and connect theory to practice to enhance practical

relevance. The course also encourages diverse perspectives and experiences to create a richer learning environment. Reflection is encouraged to foster deeper comprehension and personal and professional development. Future research should focus on long-term impact analysis, comparative studies, cross-cultural dynamics, and global citizenship development. These recommendations aim to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of diplomatic concepts and prepare them for diverse global environments.

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