



FACTORS AFFECTING LONELINESS IN OVERSEAS STUDENTS: A SCOPING REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Overseas students have a high risk of experiencing loneliness due to increased social demands and feelings of homesickness. There have been many studies on factors affecting loneliness in overseas students, but there has been no explanation that discusses cultural factors, social isolation, social support, discrimination, geography and adaptation. Objective: This study was conducted to explore research findings related to factors that influence loneliness in overseas students. Methods: Researchers used the scoping review method to get a clear picture of the factors that influence loneliness in overseas students. A literature search was conducted using the keywords "loneliness factor" AND "overseas" AND "students". The databases used were Scencedirect, Scopus, and Pubmed. Inclusion criteria were articles from publications in the last 5 years (2019-2023), articles in English, quantitative and qualitative research with the research population in the form of loneliness in overseas students, the article was accessible. Screening was stepwise and documented according to the PRISMA flowchart. Results: Based on identification, there were 224 articles from scencedirect, scopus, and pubmed. 9 articles were obtained that fit the criteria after going through the selection process. Researchers used the PEO question format (population, exposure, results) to find related research articles. Conclusion: Based on the analysis of 9 literatures, it is concluded that loneliness in overseas students is influenced by many factors such as cultural factors, social support, discrimination, geography, and adaptation.

Keywords: factors: loneliness: students: overseas

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INTRODUCTION

Overseas students who live life as migrants to continue their education in a new environment or area, the problems that will certainly be faced are adjustments to foreign and new cultures, new social environments, and educational systems that may be different (De Jong et al, 2010). The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared loneliness an urgent global health threat. In fact, the US surgeon general said that the impact of dying from loneliness is equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. This comes after the Covid-19 pandemic brought economic and social activity to a halt, increasing levels of loneliness, but also amid a new awareness of the importance of loneliness-influenced health problems (Riyadi, 2023). Overseas students must be able to adapt to changing conditions, therefore the demands in adapting to the environment and various kinds of changes that occur quickly and continuously can cause stress for overseas students. This source of stress if left unchecked will trigger feelings of loneliness in overseas students due to separation from parents, friends, siblings, and close friends (Ghiggia, et al 2023).

Overseas students have a high risk of experiencing loneliness due to increased social demands and feelings of homesickness (Iyer R. et al, 2023). One of the factors causing feelings of loneliness is the low quality of social relationships in overseas students, there is a change in residence which begins with living with parents then living alone and away from friends in

their hometown, which makes overseas students vulnerable to loneliness (Cahyadi, 2019). Students who experience loneliness have a negative view of themselves, others and their environment. Students who experience high levels of loneliness will be accompanied by feelings of anxiety, unhappiness, perceptions of others also tend to be negative so that it is very difficult to build relationships both individually and in groups. High levels of loneliness suffered over a long period of time can have a negative impact on overseas students (Rantepadang, A. 2020).

The results of the mental health survey of the Indonesian people in May - June 2021 conducted by Into The Light coincided with mental health month. Into The Light itself is a community whose main mission is to prevent teen suicide in Indonesia. The survey results revealed that around 98% of participants who were university students felt lonely in the past month. Loneliness transcends borders and is a global public health issue that affects every aspect of health, well-being, and development, but it is also damaging the lives of young people. Between 5% and 15% of adolescents including university students experience loneliness, according to figures that may be underestimated. In Africa, 12.7% of adolescents experience loneliness compared to 5.3% in Europe (Renata R, 2023). Many review articles have been conducted on overseas students to find out the influencing factors. Research on loneliness in overseas students more specifically looks at social relationship factors, communication with others, and gender. Research articles on factors affecting loneliness in overseas students have been carried out, but there is no explanation that discusses cultural factors, social isolation, social support, discrimination, geography and adaptation. This study fills a gap in the literature related to loneliness among overseas students by exploring factors that have not been widely explored before, such as cultural factors, social isolation, social support, discrimination, geography, and adaptation. Each of these factors plays an important role in understanding the more complex experience of loneliness among overseas students. So the researcher conducted a scoping review related to the factors that influence loneliness in overseas students.

METHOD

Researchers used the scoping review method to conduct a systematic review in identifying available evidence on a predetermined topic to find key factors of a concept (Munn et al., 2018). The stages in compiling a scoping review refer to Arksey & O'Malley (2005), which have been modified by Levac, Colquhoun and O'Brien including identifying research questions clearly and objectively; identifying relevant articles, selecting related literature from articles and extracting data; organizing, summarizing, and analyzing; reporting data results. This research question is "What are the factors that influence loneliness in overseas students?" The second is identifying relevant literature sources. The source of the relevant literature search used databases from sciencedirect, scopus and wiley with a research time of January 01, 2019 to December 31, 2023. In the literature search using Boolean operators "OR/AND". While the literature search was carried out using the search keywords "loneliness factor" AND "overseas" AND "students". The search results in the search engine obtained 224 articles related to the research topic. Scopus as many as 6 articles, Pubmed as many as 163 articles and Sciencedirect as many as 55 articles.

The third stage is selecting literature that matches the research topic. At this stage the researcher selects the literature that has been obtained based on the keywords that have been determined. The literature will be selected according to the inclusion criteria set, the inclusion criteria in the search for this research article, including: free fulltext, accessible (open access), publication in the last 5 years (2019-2023), English, literature with overseas student

populations, quantitative and/or qualitative literature. The article exclusion criteria are research that is not the result of a review. The fourth stage is mapping and collecting. Researchers conducted an analysis of the selected literature. Then the results of the analysis are presented in tabular form. Data extraction in tabular form is used to obtain relevant data from the selected articles. The final stage is to compile the selected analysis results. The researcher analyzes and makes a discussion of the articles that have been presented in the table.

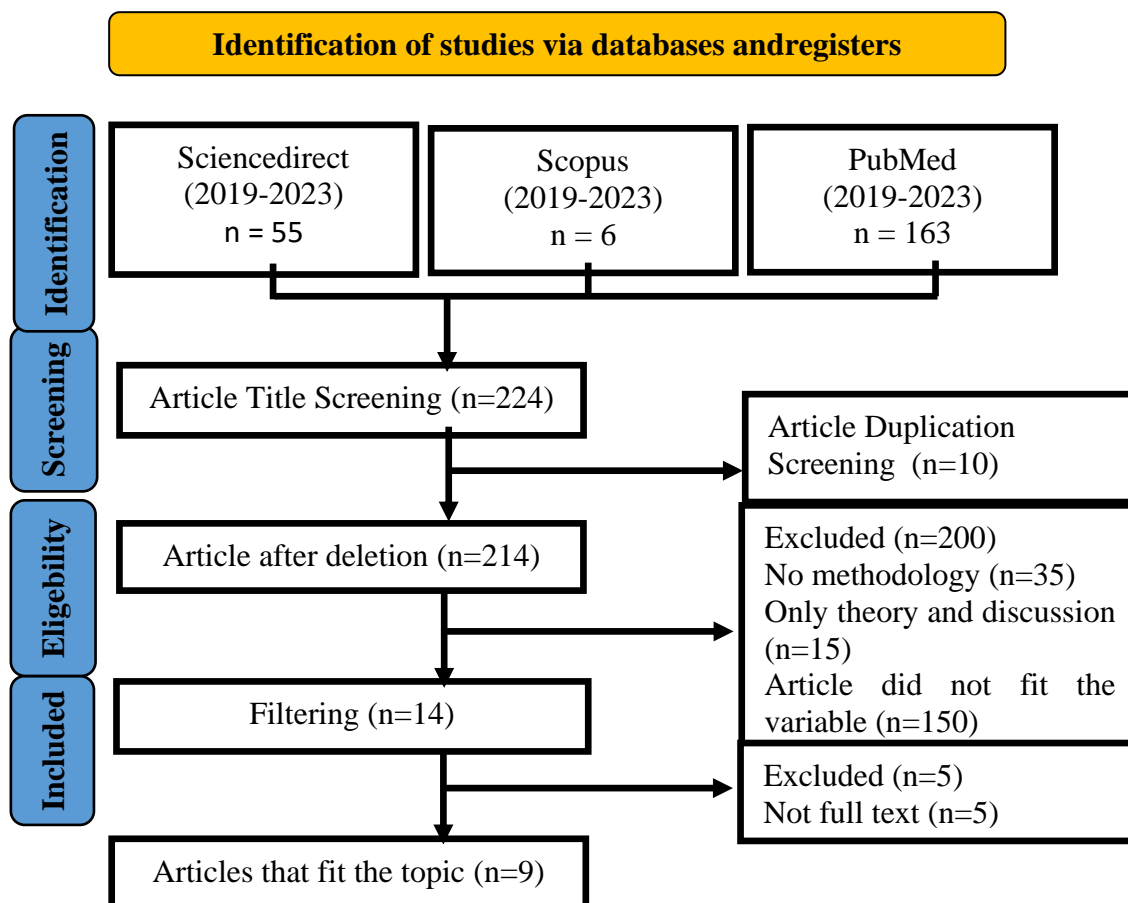


Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram of studies search

Articles that have been obtained are extracted in the form of a matrix in Microsoft Word. The domains used in data extraction include the name of the researcher, year, article title, design, respondents or participants, and the findings can be seen in table 1. The data selection process is carried out through several stages, starting from selecting articles that are in accordance with the research objectives, namely knowing the factors that affect loneliness in overseas students through article titles and abstracts obtained from various search engines such as scienDirect, scopus, and pubmed. The appropriate articles were then analyzed in more depth by reading the entire content of the article including the year of publication, location and year of research, research design, population characteristics. The collected literature was then analyzed according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria determined by the researcher and then mapping articles based on characteristics. Data synthesis was conducted by reading and analyzing relevant articles using a thematic analysis approach. This process involved organizing data based on certain characteristics, identifying themes or patterns, and comparing and synthesizing findings from selected articles. These steps assisted the researcher in organizing and analyzing information from various articles, so that the data

collected could be thoroughly analyzed to provide a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of the topic under study.

RESULT

A total of 224 articles were obtained as literature from Sciencedirect (55 articles), Scopus (6 articles), and pubmed (163 articles). There were 10 articles that were the same in the data base to be excluded and 214 articles remained. Of the 214 articles, 200 articles were excluded because 35 had no methodology, 15 only theory and discussion and 150 articles were not related to the topic. The results of filtering articles obtained 14 and excluded related explanations and complete articles obtained 9 related articles. The 9 articles analyzed were quantitative and qualitative articles. Among the 9 articles to be analyzed, all of them discuss the factors that affect loneliness in overseas students. The population in the articles analyzed is overseas students.

The results of the systematic review of articles can be seen in the following table:

Table 1.

Results of Article Review

Title	Author	Years	Objective	Methods	Population and Sampling	Results
Far away from home and (not) lonely: Relational mobility in migrants' heritage culture as a potential protection from loneliness	Heu LC, van Zomeren M, Hansen N.	2020	This research highlights the importance of cultural socialization in shaping social relationships and suggests that interventions targeting relational mobility may help reduce loneliness among migrant university students, with a particular focus on migrant university students in Groningen, the Netherlands.	Survey	The population in this study were overseas students studying at the University of Groningen or Hanze University of Applied Sciences in Groningen, the Netherlands. The sample consisted of students from Germany and China. In Study 1, the final sample consisted of 118 students from Germany and 97 students from China. In Study 2, the final sample consisted of 119 German and 92 Chinese students.	The results of this study indicate that the ability of overseas students or migrant groups to maintain or develop strong social relationships, even though they are in a new environment is associated with lower levels of loneliness, especially in the cultural context where overseas students live. The study, which focused on German and Chinese migrant students in Groningen, the Netherlands, found that freedom to choose interpersonal relationships and opportunities to meet new people were more significant in German culture compared to Chinese culture. These findings highlight the importance of background Cultural factors influence how individuals experience and cope with loneliness, and suggest that interventions to reduce loneliness should consider cultural differences in relational mobility. A cultural factor that affects loneliness in overseas students is the level of relational mobility of their home culture. Students who come from cultures with higher relational mobility, which offer more

Title	Author	Years	Objective	Methods	Population and Sampling	Results
						opportunities to meet new people or choose social relationships individually, report lower levels of loneliness after migration. This suggests that home culture can affect levels of loneliness after migration, and that higher relational mobility may protect against loneliness.
Challenges and social adaptation of international students in Saudi Arabia	Alasmari AA.	2023	Explores the challenges faced by international students at Al-Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU) in Saudi Arabia, focusing on feelings of loneliness, difficulties forming friendships, and the impact of cultural differences. This research highlights the importance of social support and community connections for mental well-being. Qualitative case study.	Qualitative case study	This study involved male international students at Al-Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU) who were 18 years of age or older, first-year full-time students admitted to undergraduate, graduate programs, The sampling size in this study was 20 male international students from various countries. Participants were selected through a technique known as purposive sampling.	The results of this study show that international students at Al-Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU) in Saudi Arabia face various challenges, including language barriers, culture shock, and loneliness. Social support factors that influence loneliness in overseas students include positive relationships with peers and social support from the local community. Good relationships with peers are critical to their success in the new environment and the local community. In addition, the more often international students interact with people from the local community, the faster they adapt. This social support and positive relationships can help reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation often experienced by overseas students. This research emphasizes the important role of support systems and active engagement in social activities for international students' adaptation and well-being.
The experience of loneliness among international Students participating in The BBC Loneliness Experiment	Zheng K, Johnson S, Jarvis R, Victor C, Barreto M, Qualter P ,et al.	2023	Exploring the experience of loneliness among international students and its relationship with their emotional well-being and health.	Reflexive thematic analysis	This study involved international students, with participants aged between 16 and 40 years old. The majority of participants identified as female (68%),	The results of this study show that international students experience significant feelings of loneliness, which has a negative impact on their well-being and social functioning. Thematic analysis revealed six main themes related to loneliness: negative psychological and social aspects, distressing experiences of being alone,

Title	Author	Years	Objective	Methods	Population and Sampling	Results
: Thematic analysis of qualitative survey data					heterosexual (53%), single (68%), full-time students (93%), and living alone (24%). Most participants reported that they often spent time alone (65%) and sometimes felt lonely (34%). The most common region of origin for participants was Europe (61%), and the most common country of study was also Europe (77%), with the UK being the most common country of study (60%).	difficulty in forming meaningful relationships, feeling trapped, awareness of stigma, and some perceived positive aspects. Most participants reported feelings of shame and self-stigma related to their loneliness, as well as fear of judgment from others. Although some participants recognized positive aspects of loneliness, such as opportunities for self-reflection and personal growth, the majority viewed it negatively. Discriminatory factors affecting loneliness in overseas students include perceived xenophobia and feelings of unkindness among local students when try to establish a relationship with them. This discrimination contributes to the feelings of loneliness experienced by overseas students.
Student loneliness through the pandemic: How, why and where?	Phillips R, Seaborne K, Goldsmith A, Curtis N, Davies A, Haynes W, et al.	2022	The purpose of this study is to understand the experience of loneliness among overseas students during the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on geographical factors that contribute to loneliness.	Survey	This study involved a population of higher education students studying at various institutions in the city of Sheffield. The sample included students from different stages of study, including undergraduate, masters and doctoral levels. In addition, the sample also included students living in different types of accommodation such as halls	The results of this study show that many university students experience intense loneliness during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is exacerbated by the fragmentation of their living and learning environments. Factors that influence loneliness in overseas students include geographical factors that shape and sometimes limit relationships and interactions. These factors include the material geography of daily life that can facilitate or hinder relationships and interactions, which is an important influence on whether or not a person feels lonely. In addition, attachment and a sense of belonging to place is also a geographical dimension of loneliness, as well as access to spaces needed for life transitions. This research highlights the

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					of residence, shared houses and family homes.	importance of understanding the geographical context of loneliness and suggests implications for policy makers and practitioners in addressing college student loneliness.
The role of loneliness and learning burnout in the regulation of physical exercise on internet addiction in Chinese college students	Wang K, Li Y, Yang Y, Zhang T, Luo J.	2023	To investigate the relationship between physical exercise, internet addiction, loneliness, and study fatigue among university students.	Cross sectional	Populasi dan sampel dalam penelitian ini terdiri dari mahasiswa di tiga universitas di China Barat Daya. Sebanyak 1500 kuesioner dibagikan, dan 1342 kuesioner berhasil dikumpulkan, dengan tingkat pengembalian sebesar 89.47%. Setelah pemrosesan data, 1238 kuesioner yang valid diperoleh, dengan tingkat keefektifan sebesar 92.25%.	The results of this study show that there is a negative correlation between physical exercise and loneliness, study fatigue, and internet addiction. In addition, there was a significant positive correlation between loneliness and study fatigue and the five sub-dimensions of internet addiction. Also, there is a significant positive correlation between study fatigue and the five sub-dimensions of internet addiction. Loneliness in university students is influenced by an individual's desire for social interaction and the gap between these desires with the actual level at hand. In addition, loneliness can also be influenced by the difficulties students face in adapting to campus life, which makes them feel too tired to study.
Only for the white? A qualitative exploration of the lived experiences of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic midwifery students	Okiki, C., Giusmin, G., & Hunter, L.	2023	Understanding the experiences of midwifery students from ethnic minority backgrounds at a UK university.	Interpretive approach	Thirteen midwifery students at three universities in South East England and one midwife preceptor.	Midwifery students from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds in the UK experience feelings of isolation and loneliness in the face of discrimination in predominantly white educational and practice environments. Factors influencing loneliness in students include group formation and friendships based on skin color. Students feel more comfortable being with people who “look like them,” and being outside of this comfort zone can make them feel lonely and isolated.
Exploring the Barriers and Coping Strategies Faced by Male	Yokoya S, Suzuki K, Sai A, Yamauchi L.	2023	to explore the barriers and coping strategies faced by male nursing students in	Descriptive qualitative.	The population and sample for this study consisted of 20 male nursing students	The results of this study show that male nursing students in Japan face various challenges in a female-dominated environment. They often experience gender

Title	Author	Years	Objective	Methods	Population and Sampling	Results
Nursing Students in Japanese Nursing Education			nursing education in Japan, including in the learning environment.		enrolled in four-year bachelor's degree nursing programs from eight universities in Hokkaido, Japan.	stereotypes, feelings of alienation, and loneliness. Factors influencing loneliness among male nursing students include a female-dominated environment and marginalization. Male students feel isolated in group work and feel uncomfortable when forced to be the leader or presenter of the group. They are also often the focus of attention from faculty, which can lead to excessive pressure to attract attention and perform academically.
Loneliness across time and space	Luhmann M, Buecker S, Rüsberg M	2023	Highlighting the factors that influence loneliness.	Meta Analysis	This study used a convenience sample that generally comes from a specific population, such as students participating for course credit.	Results from this study show that the prevalence of loneliness varies significantly across countries, with higher levels often found in southern and eastern Europe compared to northern and western Europe. Factors affecting loneliness include cultural values, socioeconomic status, and demographic characteristics.
Social Isolation and Loneliness During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Impact on Weight.	Heinberg LJ, Steffen K	2021	Reviewing the existing literature on the relationship between social isolation, loneliness, mental health and weight in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.	Quantitative	Students who study online	Results from this study show that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a significant decrease in physical activity and an increase in loneliness due to stay-at-home orders and social restrictions. Factors affecting loneliness include perceived social isolation, which can impact physical and mental health.

DISCUSSION

Based on the 9 literature sources that have been determined, some important points in the factors that can affect loneliness in overseas students are as follows: culture, social isolation, social support, discrimination, geography and adaptation. Cultural factors play an important role in the loneliness experienced by overseas students. Overseas students often experience culture shock, which is a feeling of confusion and distress when dealing with a new culture that is different from the one they are familiar with. This adjustment process can cause discomfort and difficulty in interacting with people around them, which in turn can increase loneliness. The results of research conducted by Heu LC (2020), suggests that the ability of overseas students or migrant groups to maintain or develop strong social relationships despite being in a new environment is associated with lower levels of loneliness, especially in the cultural context in which overseas students live. This can include relationships with friends, family, or their home community, as well as the ability to build new social relationships in a

new place. This study, focusing on German and Chinese migrant students in Groningen, the Netherlands, found that the freedom to choose interpersonal relationships and the opportunity to meet new people were more significant in German culture compared to Chinese culture. These findings highlight the importance of cultural background in influencing how individuals experience and cope with loneliness, and suggest that interventions to reduce loneliness should consider cultural differences. Results from Luhmann M (2023) study, showed that the prevalence of loneliness varied significantly across countries, with higher levels often found in southern and eastern Europe compared to northern and western Europe. Factors that influence this loneliness include cultural values.

Social support is the degree of support given to overseas students, especially when they need help. This support usually comes from people who have close emotional relationships, such as family and friends. The results of research conducted by Alasmari AA. (2023), showed that international students at Al-Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU) in Saudi Arabia face various challenges, including language barriers, culture shock, and loneliness. Social support factors that influence loneliness in overseas students include positive relationships with peers and social support from the local community. Good relationships with peers are essential for their success in a new environment and are critical factors for their mental health. In addition, the more often international students interact with people from the local community, the faster they adapt. This social support and positive relationships can help reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation often experienced by overseas students. This research emphasizes the important role of support systems and active engagement in social activities for international students' adaptation and well-being.

Loneliness in overseas students can be influenced by various factors of discrimination they experience. The results of a study conducted by Zheng, K (2023), showed that international students experience significant feelings of loneliness, which negatively impacts their well-being and social functioning. Most overseas students reported feelings of shame and self-stigma related to their loneliness, as well as fear of judgment from others. Although some students recognized positive aspects of loneliness, such as opportunities for self-reflection and personal growth, the majority viewed it negatively. Discriminatory factors affecting loneliness in overseas students include perceived xenophobia and feelings of unkindness among local students when trying to establish relationships with them. Discrimination, whether racial, ethnic or gender-based, can be a factor that exacerbates loneliness for overseas students. Students who experience discrimination may find it more difficult to build healthy social relationships, due to barriers to social interaction or fear of exclusion. However, social support can help overcome these challenges by creating a safe space for students to feel accepted and valued regardless of their background. Inclusive groups or student communities that support diversity can provide a sense of security for marginalized students, reduce the impact of discrimination, and strengthen their relationships with others.

The results of Okiki, C. (2023) showed that midwifery students from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds in the UK experienced feelings of alienation and loneliness in the face of discrimination in a predominantly white educational and practice environment. Factors influencing loneliness in students include group formation and friendships based on skin color. Students feel more comfortable being with people who are similar to them, and being out of this comfort zone can make them feel lonely and isolated. This discrimination contributes to the feelings of loneliness experienced by overseas students. This study highlights the importance of interventions to prevent loneliness among international students and suggests that higher education institutions adopt strategies to

promote social integration and support. Geographical factors can contribute significantly to feelings of loneliness experienced by overseas students. Results from research by Phillips R (2022), showed that many overseas students experienced intense loneliness during the COVID-19 pandemic, which was exacerbated by the fragmentation of their living and learning environments. Factors that influence loneliness in overseas students include geographical factors that shape and sometimes limit relationships and interactions. These factors include the material geography of daily life that can facilitate or hinder relationships and interactions, which is an important influence on whether or not one feels lonely. In addition, attachment and belonging to place are also geographical dimensions of loneliness, as well as access to spaces needed for life transitions.

This research highlights the importance of understanding the geographical context of loneliness and suggests implications for policy makers and practitioners in addressing the loneliness of overseas students. Geographical isolation, the physical distance between overseas students and their families, friends or home communities, often exacerbates feelings of loneliness. But the presence of social support, whether from peers, student groups, or even through technology such as social media and communication apps, can help reduce these feelings of geographic isolation. Social support provides crucial emotional resources, such as a sense of acceptance, a feeling of connection with others, and a social presence that reinforces a sense of identity and existence. The adaptation process is one of the main challenges faced by overseas students, and difficulties in adapting can contribute to feelings of loneliness. The results of research by Wang K (2023), shows that loneliness in overseas students is influenced by individual desires for social interaction and the gap between these desires and the actual level available. In addition, loneliness can also be influenced by the difficulties students face in adapting to campus life, which makes them feel too tired to study. Overseas students often have to adapt to a culture that is different from their own. This cultural adaptation can create a sense of loneliness if students feel unable to integrate into the new environment or feel alienated. Social support provided by friends who come from the same cultural background, or who are more open and inclusive, can help students adapt better, whether in terms of language, customs, or cultural values. In addition, peers or support groups who understand these adaptation difficulties can be a place for students to share challenges and come up with solutions together. This reduces feelings of isolation and increases students' ability to cope with cultural differences and build deeper social connections.

Social isolation is a condition in which a person is separated or isolated from healthy social interactions with others, both physically and emotionally. Factors that can cause social isolation are very diverse, be it individual, environmental, or social factors. Results from research Heinberg LJ (2021), shows that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a significant decrease in college students' physical activity and an increase in loneliness due to stay-at-home orders and social restrictions. Factors affecting loneliness include the social isolation felt by overseas students, which can have an impact on physical and mental health. The results of research by Yokoya S (2023), showed that male nursing students in Japan face various challenges in a female-dominated environment. They often experience gender stereotypes, feelings of alienation, and loneliness. This social isolation can increase the risk of depression, anxiety, and stress among college students. Stress resulting from social isolation can affect physical health, such as poor sleep, lack of energy, or eating disorders. To reduce loneliness due to social isolation, students can join campus organizations or communities that match their interests or hobbies. This is a good way to meet new people, share experiences, and build relationships that can reduce loneliness.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis of the 9 literatures used, several things were found related to loneliness in overseas students. There are various factors that cause loneliness in overseas students, namely cultural factors, social isolation, social support, discrimination, geography, and adaptation. Loneliness among university students is a significant issue that can affect their social and academic well-being. Measures or concrete actions that universities can take are very important in addressing this problem, especially by introducing or improving programs that can support students' social and emotional integration. More inclusive cultural orientation programs, peer mentoring networks, and better access to mental health services can reduce social isolation and increase the sense of connectedness among students. In addition, creating opportunities for engagement in social and academic activities can also help students feel more connected and supported. There is a need for future research that provides opportunities to delve deeper into the dynamics of loneliness, with a focus on longitudinal studies that can track students' experiences throughout their studies. Research on the influence of digital social networks also needs to be expanded to understand their role in reducing loneliness, as well as how academic and social engagement may interconnect in shaping the overall student experience.

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