

Education Abroad and the Character of Nationalism: A Case Study of Indonesian Students in Malaysia

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Abstrak: Pendidikan di luar negeri telah menjadi pilihan bagi pelajar Indonesia untuk mendapatkan pendidikan terbaik. Malaysia merupakan salah satu tujuan pendidikan internasional yang paling diminati oleh masyarakat Indonesia. Ribuan pelajar Indonesia telah memilih Malaysia untuk mendapatkan pengalaman akademis. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap bagaimana pengalaman belajar di luar negeri, khususnya di Malaysia, memengaruhi pandangan nasionalis pelajar Indonesia. Metode penelitian ini menggunakan studi kasus yang berfokus pada pelajar Indonesia yang belajar di Universitas Islam Internasional Malaysia. Metode pengumpulan data menggunakan kuesioner untuk mengukur Nasionalisme dan kontribusi bagi negara. Pelajar yang belajar di luar negeri menghadapi tantangan dan peluang yang dapat memengaruhi perspektif mereka sebagai warga negara Indonesia. Beberapa hal yang dapat memengaruhi perspektif mereka antara lain kualitas pendidikan, kesempatan kerja dengan upah yang tinggi, dan fasilitas publik yang sangat baik. Hasil analisis data menunjukkan bahwa pelajar Indonesia di Malaysia memiliki rasa Nasionalisme yang meningkat meskipun mereka memiliki peluang yang baik untuk tetap tinggal di Malaysia. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan tentang bagaimana Nasionalisme tumbuh bahkan ketika tinggal di luar negeri. Hasil penelitian ini dapat menjadi dasar bagi pemerintah Indonesia untuk merancang program yang dapat mendukung pendidikan dan kesempatan kerja bagi pelajar Indonesia yang belajar di luar negeri. Peneliti dapat melakukan penelitian lebih lanjut untuk memahami dampak jangka panjang dari pendidikan internasional terhadap pandangan nasionalis pelajar Indonesia

Kata Kunci: Pandangan tentang Nasionalisme, Pengurusan Otak, Kontribusi Negara, Pendidikan Luar Negeri, Malaysia

Abstract: Education abroad has become a choice for Indonesian students to get the best education. Malaysia is one of the most popular international education destinations among Indonesians. Thousands of Indonesian students have chosen Malaysia to gain academic experience. This study aims to reveal how the experience of studying abroad, especially in Malaysia, affects the nationalist views of Indonesian students. This research method uses a case study focusing on Indonesian students studying at the International Islamic University Malaysia. The data collection method uses a questionnaire to measure Nationalism and contribution to the country. Students studying abroad face challenges and opportunities that can affect their perspective as Indonesian citizens. Some things that can affect their perspective include the quality of education, employment opportunities with high wages, and excellent public facilities. The results of the data



analysis show that Indonesian students in Malaysia have an increased sense of Nationalism even though they have good opportunities to stay in Malaysia. This research provides insights into how Nationalism grows even when living abroad. The results of this study can be the basis for the Indonesian government to design programs that can support education and employment opportunities for Indonesian students studying abroad. Researchers can conduct further research to comprehend the long-term impact of international education on the nationalistic views of Indonesian students

Keywords: *Views on Nationalism, Brain drain, State Contribution, Education abroad, Malaysia*

Introduction

In 2045, Indonesia has a Vision to become a developed and prosperous country characterized by achieving various high development indicators and a better quality of life for all Indonesians. The 2045 Golden Indonesia Vision consists of four main pillars, namely the Nationalism pillar, the superior human pillar, the good governance pillar, and the advanced economy pillar (Bappenas, 2019). From this vision, developing superior human beings with insight into Nationalism is the key to achieving Indonesia's Vision 2045. The problem of unemployment is still a major problem that is a challenge in developing Human Resources (HR). According to data from Indonesia's Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in February 2022, the open unemployment rate in Indonesia in August 2021 was 6.5 per cent or around 8.23 million people out of a total labour force of 126.88 million people. (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2022).

Studying abroad is one of the alternatives chosen to improve competence and opportunities for employment. Students' motivation to study abroad is rooted in their desire to improve their lives. Several factors influence their motivation to study abroad: gender, parent's education level, previous international experience, age and household income (Pope et al., 2014). Study abroad experience is believed to increase self-efficacy among students (Cubillos & Ilvento, 2012). Thus, the study abroad experience is thought to create success among international students (Mulvaney, 2017).

There are many reasons why students choose to study abroad. A study of Norwegian students found that the two most prominent reasons for students to study abroad were that they thought it would be interesting to study in an unfamiliar environment and to have a sense of adventure (Wiers-Jensen, 2003). Langley and Breese [7] found that positive stories from other students had a major influence on the choice to study abroad. According to the "Push-pull" model, student mobility comes from country factors, both from the country sending students out (push factor) and factors from the country receiving students (pull factor) (Cheng et al., 2020; Pham, 2018). Push factors can create interest in studying for students who want to study abroad. Push factors can be political, cultural or financial. Pull factors make a particular country attractive as a host country for international students (Sandra, 2020). So, in general, the factors that cause students to study abroad are political, cultural or financial.

According to data released by UNESCO, around 53,604 Indonesian students are studying abroad. This number places Indonesia as the 4th largest student-sending country in the world after China, India, and South Korea. However, some students are reluctant to return to Indonesia after completing their education. 413 LPDP scholarship recipients are reluctant to return to Indonesia (Kasih, 2023). Factors influencing Indonesian students' decision to remain in the country or work abroad include family and personal reasons, career considerations, contractual obligations to scholarship aid sources, financial incentives, tax-related issues, concern for contributing to Indonesia's development, and temporary workplace plans after graduation (Buchori, 2011). Graduates choose to work or pursue a career outside their country due to various factors, such as the fact that the government does not highly appreciate them.

Graduates of foreign education choose to work abroad rather than in Indonesia not only in terms of low income, but also appreciation of the field of work that does not meet the expectations of foreign alums. (Inayati et al., 2020). International education for Indonesian graduates offers professional, affective, cultural and career benefits, but re-entering the workforce and building professional networks can be challenging. International education for Indonesian graduates has various benefits regarding professional development, emotional growth, cultural exposure, and job prospects. However, it is essential to acknowledge that re-entering the home country and establishing professional networks can present specific difficulties. (Cannon, 2000). The reluctance to return to Indonesia has led to the brain drain phenomenon. Brain drain is the movement of intellectuals, scientists, and scholars from developing countries to rich countries (Inayati et al., 2020; Morabety & Morabety, 2022).

This study aims to analyze the nationalistic views of students studying abroad. The results of this study can help the government understand the conditions of students studying abroad so that it can provide appropriate support. It can provide input for the Indonesian government to improve its contribution to the education and career prospects of students who choose to study abroad. The support offered by the government to students studying abroad can be a way to attract them to return and contribute to Indonesia's development

Method

The case study was chosen as a fixed method to explore students' perceptions of Nationalism and the country's contribution to education and career prospects. The sample of this research is Indonesian students studying at the International Islamic University Malaysia. The research instrument used was a questionnaire. We used the questionnaire to measure Nationalism and the country's contribution to education and career opportunities. Descriptive statistics analyzed the data obtained

Result and Discussion

Nationalism Character

The opportunity to study abroad can influence the nationalistic views of Indonesian students. Cultural differences, academic experience, and quality of life can affect the nationalistic sentiments of Indonesian students. In this study, researchers measured the nationalist views of Indonesian students studying at Islamic University Malaysia using three indicators: pride in the Indonesian nation, participation in national activities, and commitment to contribute to the country. Figure 1 displays the results of data analysis on the nationalist views of Indonesian students.

Data was collected using a questionnaire given to students from Indonesia who studied at the International Islamic University Malaysia. Table 1 displays the questionnaire used to measure Nationalism.

Table 1. Instruments of Nationalism

No.	Indicator	Question
1.	Pride in the nation	How proud are you to be an Indonesian citizen? How much do you feel attached to Indonesian culture and values?
2.	Participation in National Activities	How many times have you participated in nationality activities while studying abroad? What is your level of involvement in Indonesian student communities or organizations abroad? How active are you in promoting Indonesian culture abroad?
3.	Commitment to contribute to the country	How much do you believe your education and experience abroad can help Indonesia? How confident are you that you can make a meaningful contribution to Indonesia? How much do you want to return to Indonesia after completing your education abroad?

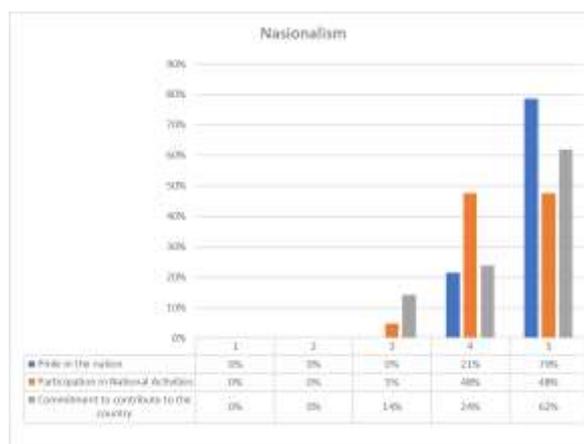


Figure 1. Results of Nationalism Views

Based on the data presented in Figure 1, it can be seen that Indonesian students who study in Malaysia have a high sense of Nationalism towards the nation. Data obtained from the observation instrument shows pride in the nation by 79%, participation in national activities by 48%, and commitment to contribute to the country by 62%.

The strong sense of Nationalism of Indonesian students studying in Malaysia can be a supporting factor in attracting foreign graduates to pursue a career in Indonesia. The quality of education, better job opportunities and good public facilities do not make their desire for a career in Indonesia recede. The government needs to respond to the commitment of overseas graduates to return to Indonesia by providing them with decent employment opportunities. Academic support and employment opportunities allow overseas graduates to contribute to the country's development.

State Contribution

The country's contribution is one factor that plays a role in the return of overseas graduates to a career in Indonesia. Government support in financing education can create professional candidates. Quality human resources also need to be supported by decent employment opportunities. Both of these can be the capital of Indonesia's development. In this study, the state's contribution is measured based on indicators of funding assistance, academic support and employment opportunities in Indonesia. Table 2 displays the instrument used to measure Indonesian students' perceptions of the state's contribution.

Table 2. State Contribution Instrument

No.	Indicator	Question
1.	Funding Assistance	How satisfied are you with the financial assistance provided by the Indonesian government to students studying abroad? How easily can you get information and access to funding sources and financial aid from the Indonesian government for studying abroad? How much do you agree that the Indonesian government has provided equal opportunities for diverse student groups to receive financial assistance?
2.	Academic Support	How much do you feel that the training programs and seminars provided by the Indonesian government have contributed to improving the quality of your education abroad? How much do you feel the Indonesian government has supported your research and academic projects abroad? How much do you feel the Indonesian government has streamlined the administrative process related to your education abroad?
3.	Contribution Opportunities	How much do you feel the government or relevant institutions have provided adequate job opportunities after completing your education abroad? How much do you feel that the public sector or government has provided sufficient opportunities for you to contribute to national development? How much do you feel that the government has provided adequate support and information for you to secure job opportunities?

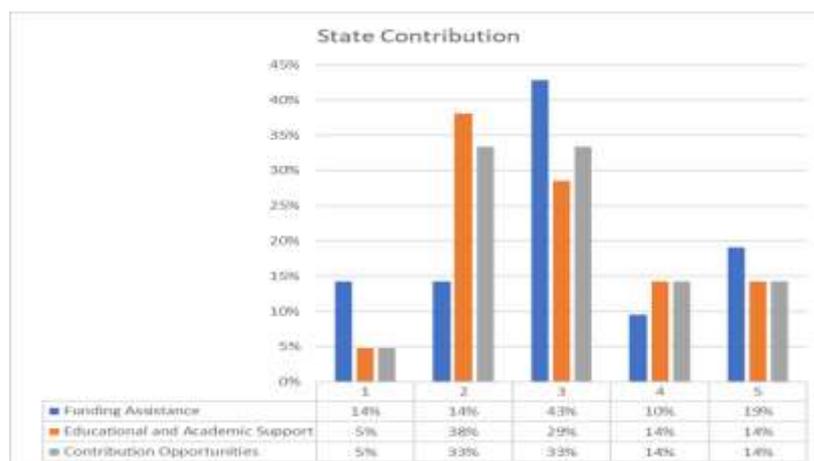


Figure 2. Results of State Contribution

Based on the data presented in Figure 2, we can see that Indonesian students studying in Malaysia feel that the state's contribution to students studying in Malaysia is moderate. Data from the observation instrument shows funding assistance at 43%, educational and academic support at 29%, and contribution opportunities at 33%.

Discussion

The results of the data analysis show that Indonesian students studying in Malaysia have a good perception of Nationalism. Indonesian students studying in Malaysia have a high pride in being Indonesian citizens, demonstrated through the statement that they are very proud to be Indonesian citizens. Students from Indonesia feel they have an attachment to Indonesian cultural values, which are still actualized in their daily activities, such as communicating in Indonesian, attending Indonesian community studies and being active in Indonesian student organizations. Pride as Indonesian citizens is also manifested through active participation in activities organized by the Indonesian Government in Malaysia.

An active role in Indonesian student organizations in Malaysia is a form of pride as an Indonesian citizen. Activities organized by Indonesian student organizations are a suggestion to promote Indonesian culture to the Malaysian community. Introducing Indonesian culture can create a positive image of the Indonesian nation in the eyes of the international community.

The strong sense of Nationalism possessed by Indonesian students in Malaysia can prevent the brain drain phenomenon. Apart from factors within students, external factors in the form of government support for academic activities and the provision of employment opportunities can be one of the reasons students return to Indonesia. The results of the data analysis show that students from Indonesia are not satisfied with the Indonesian government's funding assistance during their studies in Malaysia. Indonesian students argue that the Indonesian government has not been able to provide decent employment opportunities for them. These things can be a factor that causes Indonesian students to prefer a career abroad.

The quality of education, public facilities and more secure employment opportunities in Malaysia do not make Indonesian students lose their Nationalism. The results show that Indonesian students have a solid commitment to return and contribute to the development of Indonesia. The Indonesian government needs to respond to the desire for a career in Indonesia by providing decent jobs. Decent job opportunities can be critical in attracting students studying abroad to return and pursue a career in Indonesia

Conclusion

The results showed that students studying in Malaysia have a strong sense of Nationalism, led by pride in being Indonesian citizens, active involvement in Indonesian student organization activities and a solid commitment to contribute to the country. The commitment to contribute to the country is sometimes still constrained by the employment opportunities available in Indonesia. The Indonesian government must provide educational scholarship support and decent job opportunities so that young generations can contribute to Indonesia's development

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