

Social Dynamics of the Minang Ethnic Diaspora in Japan: Case Study of Japanese Literature Graduates of Universitas Bung Hatta

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Article Info

Article History

Received:

Dec 2021

Accepted:

Feb 2022

Published:

March 2022

Keywords:

Social Dynamics, Diaspora, Alumni

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is firstly to know and describe how the diaspora Alumni of the Japanese Literature Study Program of Universitas Bung Hatta live in Japan. Then, secondly, the purpose of this study is to know whether the language and culture that they studied at the University are useful in their life in Japan. The formulation of the problems that want to be studied is the impression felt when first arriving in Japan, the related learning of Japanese language and culture in living life in Japan, and what kind of living life by diaspora alumni of Japanese literature Minang ethnic in Japan. The methods used in this study are qualitative descriptive utilising questionnaires and structured interviews. The number of identified respondents is 29. The questionnaires were constructed in Google Forms, distributed through social media: WhatsApp. The data were then analysed using interpretative descriptive models. The analysis suggested that the obstacles experienced by Japanese Literature alumni from Minang ethnic diaspora in Japan when they first arrived in Japan were language and food. This is due to their lack of training in using Japanese when they were in college, and as ethnic Minangs, they cannot escape the taste of Minang cuisine. While related to the learning of Japanese language and culture, the material that has been given is felt quite helpful and quite used in, as well as the Japanese language that the diaspora uses, during living life in Japan, the Minang ethnic diaspora cannot be separated from consuming Indonesian cuisine or food, because this is also supported by the ease of obtaining Indonesian food and cuisine. This study finding is expected to add insight into the life of the Indonesian diaspora in Japan and can be a reference for further research related to the Indonesian diaspora.

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INTRODUCTION

Today the Indonesian diaspora in various regions of the world is a topic of conversation, including in Japan. Currently, the Indonesian diaspora in Japan is ranked 11th (PSDR, 2017) Japanese

Ministry of Justice the number of Indonesian citizens as of March 22, 2019, living in Japan is currently 56,346 people or experiencing an increase of 12.7% compared to the previous year, including apprentices, other workers, permanent residents, and so on, but excluding tourists (Susilo, 2019) countries that are in high demand by the people of Indonesia. Not only as a tourist destination but also to continue education and work (PSDR, 2017). This is because Japan is known for its technological and cultural advancement. Japanese cultures such as cosplay, manga, J-Pop, and others, as well as are well-liked not only by children and teenagers but also by adults. In addition, the Japanese government provides opportunities for young Indonesian people to be able to work in Japan.

For Japanese learners, being able to go and work in Japan is a goal he wants to achieve, including Japanese language learners at Universitas Bung Hatta's Japanese Literature Study Program. Therefore, Japanese language enthusiasts continue to increase from year to year both formal institutions and non-formal institutions such as training and skills institutions. Students who have experienced studying or interning in Japan generally want to return to Japan. Their goal in Japanese Literature is generally to go to Japan and work.

Currently, there are several alumni of the Japanese Literature Study Program who have realized their dreams to go and work in Japan, with various fields of work that they live in. Based on this, the study aims to describe the life lived by the Minang ethnic diaspora by looking at the case of Japanese Literature graduates as respondents. The purpose of this study is to describe what was first felt when they arrived in Japan, and the life lived by the Minang ethnic diaspora from Japanese literature graduates. Research related to the Indonesian diaspora has been widely done, but related to the Indonesian diaspora in Japan, especially the Minang ethnic group, has never been done.

Although it is not yet certain that currently, the number of Indonesian diasporas abroad is around 6-8 million people, with various professions in their fields (Bahtiar, 2015). Diasporas are in all fields, both those who continue their education and those who work (Kompasiana, 2014). Four groups can be said to be the Indonesian diaspora, namely: Indonesians with Indonesian passports left their homeland to work abroad; Indonesians who then become other citizens or transfer citizenship; people who are descendants of Indonesians or mixed-race; foreigners who have lived in Indonesia and returned to their home countries, but they still love Indonesia (Kompasiana, 2014). While in the sense of "merantau" in the Minang community contains six points contained in it, namely: leave his hometown; of his vile bodies; for a long period or not; to seek a livelihood, demanding education, and seeking experience; have the intention of going back home; a social institution that is civilized (Naim, 2013).

As for social dynamics or social change, as stated by experts, is as follows, Willian F Ogburn states that the scope of social change includes elements of spirituality both material and immaterial. Kingsley Davis mentions social change is changes that occur in the structure and function of society, while Selo Soemardjan mentions social change is all changes in the institutions of community that affect the social system, including values, attitudes, and patterns of behaviour among community groups. (Abimuda, 2021)

Research conducted by Harza examined the problem of "Indonesia in Japan Reorganizing Indonesian Nationhood through Diaspora Experience Perspective". In his research, Harza mentioned that from his observations about the behaviour, attitudes, and views of some diaspora who have settled in Japan, found that most diasporas do not care about their national character. This seems to be due to a conflicting discussion between the state's desire for the diaspora, which always gives a slogan to support the state, and social activists who always say that they, the diaspora, are exploited by the state. This resulted in the extinction of the sense of nationality in the diaspora and did not know how the national practice itself. So, this research from Zulkifli is more emphasized the behaviour of the Indonesian diaspora in Japan in interpreting and narrating their national practices (Harza, 2019).

Another study was conducted by Kurniawan, who discussed the Efforts of the Indonesian Diaspora in the United States in Improving Brand Awareness through food festivals. In his research, Aucky examined the concepts, practices, and cons regarding the gastro of diplomacy, conducted by the Indonesian diaspora in America. From the results of his analysis, it was concluded that the Indonesian diaspora also introduced Indonesia through food, one of the proofs is Rendang & Co, which also often follows a series of cooperation with Indonesian representatives in the United States, such as food festivals and bazaars. So, this diplomacy gastro supports the diplomatic relations between Indonesia and the United States in the economic field. From the findings and discussion, Kurniawan concluded that the diaspora is indirectly a supporter of the country from abroad, Through the Indonesia Diaspora Network, the relationship between the government and diaspora becomes more effective. Cooperation between Indonesia and the United States is spearheading in conducting diplomacy activities in the future. The Indonesian diaspora also introduces Indonesia through food. Through the introduction of food or culinary, other countries will be more familiar with one of Indonesia's cultures, so that food becomes a strong enough thing to unite relationships between people and cultural acculturation. Food is the unifier of a difference (Kurniawan, 2019).

The study of diasporan Minang was conducted by Sawirman, with the title of his research "Between the Validity and Inspirationality of The Historical Discourse of the Minang Diaspora in Bali". This research discusses the historical discourse of the Minang diaspora in Bali, especially about the discourses that inspire them to travel to Bali. From the results of this research, it is known that the dominant discourse that inspires Minang people to migrate to Bali is culture, economy, and ideology. The theory it uses is an approach to historical discourse, with methods of retrieving data from documents and interviews (Sawirman, 2019).

Another study that examines the Minang diaspora, is in a thesis written by Desnalia with the title "Meaning of Merantau for Minang People in Palembang City". In this research, Desnalia aims to find out the awareness, motives, and meaning of the Minangkabau tribe in Pipa Reja Village to the tradition of going to wander (Desnalia, 2019).

Naim has done research on overseas Minang, as his dissertation. But Naim, discussed the migration pattern of the Minang people, especially in Indonesia. Meanwhile, research on the Indonesian diaspora abroad that has been carried out by previous research does not focus on one ethnicity but discusses it in general terms. What distinguishes this research from previous research is the object of the research, namely the Minang diaspora who live abroad, especially in Japan.

However, the object of this research is limited to Japanese Literature alumni from West Sumatra who work and live in Japan and become the diaspora of the Minang community. Besides wanting to know about their lives in Japan, also want to know the use of Japanese language and culture learning that they get during college. Therefore, this research is deemed necessary because it provides an overview of the life of the Minang diaspora abroad, especially in Japan.

METHODS

This type of research is qualitative descriptive research, i.e., a method of examining the status of a group of people, an object, a set of conditions, a system of thought, or a class of events in the present (Nazir, 2014)

The subject of this study were 29 alumni of the Japanese Literature Study Program. Primary data sources are obtained from the results of the dissemination of questionnaires, with the type of questionnaires of structured and open questions, and photos of alumni diaspora activities obtained from social media alumni, which have been asked for permission while the source of secondary data is obtained from books related to the diaspora. The data collection technique used is in the form of questionnaires. The data is analysed by using qualitatively interpretive. Lindolf (1995) and Aymon & Holloway (2008) mentioned the activity of listening to the voices of others, in this relationship includes the entirety of data, both obtained through primary and secondary sources, which is then combined with the understanding and explanation of the researcher, as a process of interpretation, thus generating new meanings (Ratna, 2010). In analysing, the data that has been collected is coded. The coding given is by giving a number for each answer. After coding, then proceed with data tabulation, namely by entering data into tables and arranging numbers so that the number of cases in various categories can be counted. Then in analysing the data used cross-analysis, namely analysis using two cross tables in the form of frequency or percentage, the variables are presented in a table.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings and discussion of the study begin with an overview of the condition of the alumni diaspora in Japan. Then an analysis of the condition of diaspora alumni when they first arrived in Japan, and the lives of alumni in Japan.

Characteristics of respondents

Respondents, as well as subjects of this study, are Japanese Literature alumni who work and settle in Japan are 29 people, between 2 to 10 years, or more. Male respondents as many as 8 people: 5 of them were married and 3 were unmarried, and female respondents as many as 21: 11 of them were married, 3 of whom were married to Japanese, while 10 were unmarried.

From chart 1, we can see that along with the development of the times there are many Minang women who go travelling because they want to pursue a career or continue their education. This is following one of the Minang cultural typologies mentioned by Rudolf Mrazek, namely dynamic, which gives birth to a free and broad-minded soul that causes the spirit to change fate by pursuing knowledge and wealth (Bilqisthy, n.d.).

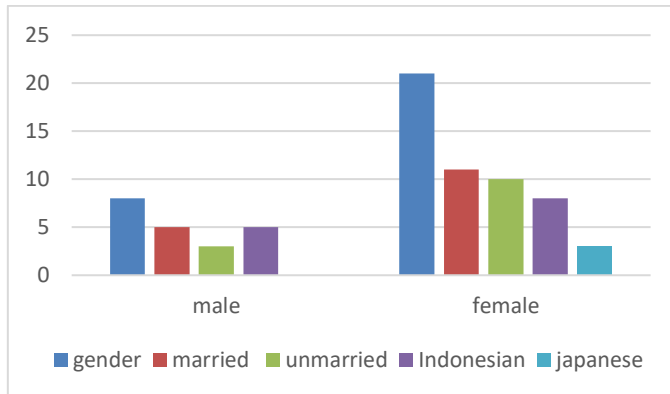


Chart 1: Gender and marital status

The types of jobs pursued by diaspora alumni mostly work as office or company staff, in the field of tourism and apprenticeship.

Profession	Frekuensi	Persentase	Level of Education
Tourism and hotels	5	17,2	Bachelor Degree
Translator /interpreter	3	10,3	Bachelor Degree
Internship	5	17,2	Bachelor Degree
Partime/freelance	2	6,9	Bachelor Degree
Salaryman	9	31,0	Bachelor Degree
House wife	2	6,9	Bachelor Degree
Postgraduate Students	1	3,4	Bachelor Degree
Marketing	1	3,4	Bachelor Degree
Construction	1	3,4	Bachelor Degree
Total	29	100	

Table 1: Type of jobs pursued by diaspora alumni

From the type of work pursued by the alumni diaspora, it is seen that most of the alumni diaspora work as office employees. This is following what was stated by Naim (2013), that the main work usually carried out by Minangkabau people overseas apart from trading is working in an office, either in the government, private sector, or company. This is because it is following the level of education they have. In addition to working in the office also looks for a job that suits the level of education and the background of science he has, such as being a translator.

First Impression of Japan

The following description discusses what the alumni diaspora felt when they first arrived in Japan. Such as obstacles, how to adapt, how to overcome cultural shocks, related to the preparations made before leaving for Japan and before triggering to stay in Japan.

Everyone has different feelings when they first arrive at a new and unfamiliar place, some are quick to adapt, and some are difficult. Various factors cause a person to be difficult to adapt or exposed to cultural shock when the first time arrived in a new and unfamiliar place. It is also felt by the diaspora of Japanese Literature alumni when just arrived in Japan. Although nearly 50% or 15% of the respondents said they could quickly adapt, about 31% or about 9 people expressed shock and cultural shock. Respondents said they quickly adapt because they feel what they have

learned on campus is very useful and becomes the capital to live life in Japan. But because of the cultural differences between Indonesia and Japan, at first, these alumni diaspora found it difficult to adapt, especially in the work environment, especially matters related to punctuality and disciplinary issues.

Indicator	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Things felt first time arrived in Japan	Quickly adapt	14	48,3
	Shocked/exposed to culture shock	9	31,0
	Ordinary	3	10,3
	Difficult to adapt	3	10,3
TOTAL		29	100%

Table 2: First impression of Japan: feeling

From the table above it can be known that most of the alumni diaspora feels quickly adapting when it first arrives in Japan. This is because during their studies they have been given provisions about Japanese culture and society, as seen from the reasons given by the alumni diaspora:

"During my studies, I learned a lot about life in Japan, so I was easily guided to live in Japan"

"Because I have learned in terms of language and other Japanese cultural knowledge at the campus, so at the time to arrive in Japan it is not so much an obstacle"

"Because what has been learned during the lecture along with life here"

"Because all the lessons we learn at university can be applied in Japan."

From these reasons it is clear that the basis of the alumni diaspora is quickly adapting, are to have gained knowledge about life in Japan when studied at the college. In the work environment, these alumni diasporas can generally quickly adapt and try to adapt, although at first, it feels difficult, as felt as by diaspora alumni:

"It was difficult at first because the disciplined and fast-paced culture made me want to go home. It's impossible for me to do time-hunted work. But over time it's getting used to it and getting used to such working conditions."

"Because Indonesia and Japan are very different in every way, especially the work culture."

"Although initially in the management of some things that were constrained by language, the Japanese still served well."

Although it was difficult to adapt at first, due to cultural differences and not yet familiar with the problem of punctuality but trying to work and finish the work by the time set, and finally accustomed to completing it on time.

In addition to the provision of knowledge that has been obtained during college, the cause of these alumni is quickly adapted is because basically, Minang people are easy to get along with and easily adjust to other citizens (Mughtar, 2014).

Of the 29 diaspora alumni, 13 are unmarried, and the 16 are married, they leave for Japan individually. This is as stated by Naim, that the pattern of "merantau" today is individual, compared to the ancients who "merantau" in groups. Furthermore, Naim, explained that in general Minang nomads will look for Mamak, a brother from the mother's side, when they first arrive overseas and stay at the Mamak's place (Naim, 2013). But these alumni diaspora left for Japan because of their wishes, although departing individually, both through internship institutions, and

also because they follow their husbands. So, to be able to adapt to the environment, these alumni diasporas do various ways to be able to quickly adapt to the environment, including by walking around the residence or trying as often as possible to socialize with their neighbours. Although diasporas have tried to quickly adapt to the environment of residence or workplace, in the end, some of the alumni diasporas are exposed to cultural shocks, this is due to their lack of face of different cultures. So, to overcome this, the alumni diaspora made various efforts to overcome cultural shocks and to overcome their longing for their hometown. The way to do this is to call parents or divert positive things, such as travelling, or playing games, and also meeting with fellow Indonesian diaspora or Minang ethnic diaspora.

The most basic obstacles felt when first arriving in Japan are language and food. Although they are alumni or graduates of Japanese Literature, it turns out that Language becomes an obstacle. This is known because during college they feel less practice speaking in Japanese. In addition, it is also because, the language learned is different from the language used in fact, because in Japanese there is *hougen*, dialect, and also the use of vocabulary, which is not learned during college. However, in general, the Japanese language they use can be understood by the Japanese when communicating. With regards to food, the obstacle is the taste and smell that is different from Minang cuisine that will taste, and also because there are concerns with its idolatry. Nevertheless, the diaspora of alumni is trying to be able to enjoy it.

Indicator	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Obstacle when first time arriving in Japan	Language	14	48,3
	Food	14	48,3
	culture	1	3,4
Total		29	100

Table 3: First impression of Japan: obstacle

The cause of language and food is due to differences from those commonly found in Indonesia, with those felt in Japan. As stated by one diaspora, related to food, namely:

"Because it doesn't fit on the tongue. Japanese food commonly eaten in Indonesia is very different from in real Japan. So for me, it takes time to adjust it."

Life in Japan

Economic factors have always been a person's goal to get out of his village or to go in search of a better livelihood. The economic struggle becomes one of the Primordial reasons for travelling. More so in this day and age, young people always have the desire to travel to seek sustenance or a better livelihood for their future (Naim, 2013). This is also the case with diaspora alumni, from the results of questionnaires obtained, the reason or purpose they go to and settle in Japan is to work and improve the standard of living. Although some continue their education, the number is very small. This is in line with what was written by (Naim, 2013) that the reason they went to "merantau" is to work or improve the standard of living, not because there is no longer agricultural land that can no longer be worked on. But encouraged to help the family economy and build economic pressure in the village (Naim, 2013). By capitalizing on the Japanese language, they have, these alumni diaspora try to complain to Japan, especially with the current era of globalization without borders. The purpose of the alumni travelling to Japan is also per those stated by (Naim, 2013) including "finding a job and not being able to build a better future in the village"

Reason for moving to Japan	Gender		
	Man	Woman	Total
Work	3	8	11
Follow the husband/wife	0	6	6
Continuing education	2	1	3
Improving living standards	3	6	9
Total	8	21	29

Table 4: Gender and reason for moving to Japan

Because the diaspora of alumni is their goal to leave for Japan, it does not cause concern, because they already know the conditions and situation in Japan, through various information. As written by Rusdi, with the advancement of technology information, the use of social media makes it easier for people to get to know the physical condition and community of other regions. Social media as an application of the internet, such as websites, Facebook, Twitter, and others, provides information on life in big cities (Muchtar, 2014).

In the six regional points put forward by Naim, among them are "for a long period or not" and usually intending to return home". This means that "merantau" according to Naim, is not long settled in the region, but because of a purpose. It is a temporary migration, so there is a possibility that these nomads will return to their villages, although there is a possibility that they will stay forever in the country (Naim, 2013). This is also true of the alumni diaspora. From the question "are there any plans to settle in Japan" and whether there are plans to return to Indonesia, the answers given by diaspora alumni among those who have plans to stay in Japan, with those returning to Indonesia are almost the same, and many are also thinking about settling in Japan. Likewise, those who say there are no plans to return to Indonesia are also quite a lot. This shows that the diaspora of alumni is likely to settle in Japan, not only the diaspora alumni who have lived in Japan for a long time, even those who have lived less than 5 years. Surprisingly, of the 21 female respondents, 15 said they had plans to settle in Japan. This is because in this day and age Minang women are also used to "merantau", not only because they follow their husbands, but also because they want to pursue a career (Naim, 2013). As Yoeti said, although there has been no research on the "reluctance" to return to West Sumatra for successful nomads, in general, some successful nomads do not want to return to their villages. This is because to go back to the village they feel happy, but to return to live and work in the village is impossible. The reason is that living in the town or abroad is guaranteed his life and his family, his future is clear. If returning to the village must start again from scratch (Yoeti, 2017). This is also felt by the alumni, they already feel comfortable living in Japan that is all organized, and disciplined, and they feel, that life in Japan, has changed its character for the better and more organized. In addition, life in Japan is under what he expected and imagined. So, it's clear why these diaspora alumni have plans to settle in Japan and not return to Indonesia, because they are already comfortable with life in Japan.

The diaspora style of the Minang people is almost the same as the Chinese nomadic style. They will feel safe when they are in their group. So almost in almost every city where there are many Minang people, they will always form an organization or association of Minang people (Yoeti,

2017) This also happens to the alumni diaspora, although no organization has been officially formed, they form groups through FB social media, as their communication platform, called the Japanese Minang Group. Although this group is not only limited to Minang people who live in Japan only. Because the distance of residences is far apart, these alumni diasporas also rarely see each other. So that they can stay connected with each other, these alumni diasporas try to spread through social media, or by following study groups or activities carried out in Consulate General of The Republic of Indonesia or the Embassy or doing joint holiday activities for those whose residences are nearby.

One of the obstacles when it first arrived in Japan was the food problem. So that causes them to always serve Indonesian cuisine in their diet. It turns out that it continues for a long time, so food problems do not only occur when it only arrives. This is because the diaspora of alumni cannot be separated from the taste of Minang cuisine that is spicy and full of flavour. They say, "can't live without chillies", "feel less if there is no Indonesian menu". Besides not being able to leave the Indonesian cuisine menu because of its taste, also because there is a sense of concern in its idolatry, and also always feels missed by Indonesia. In addition to making Indonesian cuisine to own consumption, the diaspora alumni also sell Indonesian cuisine. As done by one of the diaspora alumni who make "tahu" (tofu). Currently, many shops are selling Indonesian food ingredients in Japan. Hence, it is easier for diaspora alumni to get Indonesian cuisine or food ingredients, both online, and offline (brick and mortar store). As done by diaspora alumni named Nurhanifah who opened a store named "Amanah Mart Yokosuka", bringing goods and materials from Minang, which was a novelty in Japan. What Nurhanifah has done has also been able to help the economy of the people of West Sumatra, especially in the pandemic period as it is today. This is in line with the remarks from former president BJ Habibie, delivered at the German Diaspora forum, Berlin, in May 2013, which said: "Indonesia should not rely solely on Natural Resources (SDA). Already Indonesia facilitates the wealth of Human Resources (HR) from the community of nomads who have big ideas and high abilities" (Tempo, Tuesday 28 May 2013 edition, Yoeti, 2017)

The idea of Nurhanifah was conveyed to the Minang diaspora in Japan through the Japanese Minang FB group. and has also been targeted with the number one person in West Sumatra, namely the Governor of West Sumatra, Mr H. Mahyeldi. What has been done by the alumni diaspora is more or less directly has introduced other Minang culinary cultures to Japan and helped the Minang people's economy. It can be understood, why these alumni diaspora cannot be separated from Indonesian cuisine, this is also supported by the availability of food ingredients that are easily obtained, either by buying or growing their own.

Concerning the social relationship with the community of the environment where they live, the alumni diaspora rarely participates in activities carried out in their environment. It's almost said never. This happens because there is no time and because it is prohibited by the companies where diaspora alumni work.

CONCLUSION

Migrating in Minangkabau culture is usually done by men. But along with the higher education of Minang women, many Minang women also go abroad to improve their lives, not only in the country but also abroad. Japanese language graduates who work in Japan adapt more quickly to

the environment, although when they first arrive in Japan, language and food are the main obstacles. The life they live in Japan can change their character in terms of responsibility and discipline, however, it does not change their habits as Minang people in trading and consuming Minang cuisine. What the Minang diaspora does is through businesses that make Indonesian food and opens a business by selling food ingredients originating from the Minang, indirectly introducing Minang culture in particular and Indonesia in general through the agricultural products of the Minang people.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the Alumni of Japanese Literature who took the time to fill out this research questionnaire, as well as the students who have assisted in the completion of this research.

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