Strengthening the Social Capital through the Local Wisdom of Indonesia's students in Thailand

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Abstract. As a long-time friend of Indonesia, Thailand is among the countries of choice for Indonesians to live overseas. This community services program has the main objective of developing social capital among the diaspora in Thailand, especially in Khon Kaen province. Most of the diaspora in Khon Kaen consists of undergraduate and postgraduate programs that receive scholarships from the Indonesian government or their internal institutions. Social capital, as in Islamic perception, “Ukhuwah Islamiyah,” and togetherness could increase their strength to bring great values to living abroad. The main problem is differences in human behaviour, human traditions, race, perspectives, and many other aspects that could decrease the togetherness value and lack of nationalism and pride in Indonesian culture. Living as a diaspora has many advantages, one of which is knowing things that one's surroundings do not, for example, culture. Diaspora Indonesia in Thailand has many greater benefits in terms of sharing Indonesian local culture in art, culinary arts, dancing, etc. Thailand citizens are mostly welcome to cultural sharing events from other countries due to receiving new knowledge concerning Indonesia. By sharing the culture and introducing Indonesia, it could increase the nationalism and togetherness of the Indonesian Diaspora. Therefore, making an event to share the local culture, which consists of many races in Indonesia, and introduce Indonesia's uniqueness is the solution to strengthening the social capital of the Diaspora Indonesia at Khon Kaen University. By collaborating with Persatuan Mahasiswa Indonesia di Thailand (PERMITHA) in the Khon Kaen branch, the community services could elaborate on local culture sharing with all Diaspora students who study at Khon Kaen University. One of the local cultures that could be shared is making batik. Sharing steps and how to make batik could interest many other Diaspora members from other countries.

Keywords: local wisdom, collaboration, social capital

1 Introduction

Claiming one's difference and turning it into symbolic capital has become a powerful and attractive strategy among those who have been marginalised or excluded from the structures of white or Western hegemony. "Diaspora" has been an increasingly popular name for that symbolic capital in recent years. In light of global power relations, the significance of diasporic identity lies in its force as a symbolic declaration of liberation from the abject position of "ethic minority" in "an oppressive national hegemony" (Clifford 1997, 255). "Diasporic identifications reach beyond ethnic status within the..."
composite, liberal state," imparting a "sense of being a 'people' with historical roots and destinies outside the time and space of the host nation" (Clifford 1997, 255).

Different religious teachings encourage forming relationships with people from different backgrounds. The Qur’an, for instance, encourages Muslims to form relationships with various people. Al-Hujurat verses in the Qur’an explain that God creates human beings with differences in terms of culture, nations, and tribes to enable them to recognize each other. The verses encourage Muslims to believe that God creates differences for a purpose. One of the purposes is to get to know each other and connect with each other. Currently, thousands of Indonesians live in Thailand, either as permanent citizens or temporary residents. They are part of the eight million Indonesian Diaspora, which are Indonesians by birth and ancestry who live outside of Indonesia (Muhiddin & Utomo, 2015). Living overseas requires diaspora and local people to understand each other’s culture and to broaden their understanding by viewing cultures from various perspectives (Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002). Intercultural communication is crucial in the development of intergroup relations and intercultural connection (Collier, 2015). According to Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern (2002), factors like communication abilities, cultural awareness, and an open mind to ambiguity all contribute to the favorability of developing intercultural connections.

To build intercultural connections between the diaspora and local people, the diaspora needs to make cultural adjustments. The cultural transition from the country of origin culture to the host country culture needs to address three areas of adjustment: individual aspects, work-related aspects, and environmental aspects (Holtbrügge, 2008).

Numerous studies about Indonesian-Thai connections at the macro-level have been done in areas such as education (Deardorff & Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017), trade (Barmeyer & Franklin, 2016), and religions (Brazal & De Guzman, 2015). At the micro-level, intercultural interaction between Indonesians and Thais has not yet been researched as much as the Indonesians’ relations with Malays, Saudis, or those from English-speaking countries (Muhidin, 2013; Muhidin & Utomo, 2015). This study explored the cross-cultural adjustment process in the intercultural interactions of Indonesians living in Thailand. It seeks to explain Indonesian experiences in the adaptation process, how they compare the culture of Thai people and that of Indonesians during the interaction, and how they respond to any differences or gaps that they find between the two cultures in order to have a smooth transition into Thai culture. This study may be useful for both decision-makers and the Indonesian Diaspora to enrich current understanding about developing the intercultural competence of Indonesians living overseas. To get a comprehensive understanding of the topic in this study, the researchers will start by explaining the history of the Thailand-Indonesia connection. The understanding of the current relations between the people of Thailand and Indonesia will never be complete without regard to the history of relations between the two parties in the past.

Understanding Thailand-Indonesia Connection

The History of the Connection Indonesia and Thailand have built a long history of connections. Geographical, cultural, religious, and historical proximity enhance the close relationship between the two nations. It was indicated that the connection between the people of the two countries might have occurred long before the Srivijaya empire (Munoz, 2016). However, it was in the Srivijaya era (7th to 13th centuries) that the connection between ancient Indonesians and Thai’s became increasingly significant (Yuliana, 2009). The early connection between the people of the two countries was mostly commercial. The Srivijaya, an ancient Indonesian kingdom, controlled international sea trade around the Melacca Strait and built wide trade relations with those from China, India, the Middle East, and states in the Malay Archipelago, including Thailand (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2016;
Rajani, 1974). Competition for influence also characterized the contact between the two nations. The kingdom of Siam, which was an ancient Thai kingdom, was specifically mentioned in history as an important cause of the diminution of Srivijaya's influence as a formidable sea power in the 13th century (Coedès, 1968). Other than the trading relationship, religious bonding became one of the powerful reasons for the past relationship. Two main religions, Islam and Buddhism, were at the center of the connection (Munoz, 2016). The relationship that Srivijaya maintained with Siam, in particular, had cultural dimensions (Howard, 2014). At the same time, by following the trade routes, Islam expanded in Southeast Asia through mainly Buddhist regions. Parameswara Dewa Shah, an Indonesian king from Palembang, attempted to seize the throne of Singapura in the fourteenth century before falling to the Majapahit or the Siamese (Miksic, 2013). Until now, we have already had meetings to prepare for the Pengajian and introduce the local culture of Diaspora Indonesia to other student unions. On April 5 and 6, both events are planned.

**Literature Review**

Disaster events often happen without warning. It is a complex, multi-faceted, and global issue. Most disasters lead to consequences such as socio-economic, mental, and physical effects. According to Wisner, Adams, and the World Health Organization (2002), there are two types of disasters: natural and man-made. Natural disasters include volcano eruptions, tsunamis, flash floods, and earthquakes. A man-made disaster consists of human accidents, military conflicts, and political unrest. Based on a study by Makwana (2019), developing countries are more susceptible to disaster due to poverty, resource deficiency, limited access to education, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of awareness and knowledge. Malaysia and Indonesia are vulnerable to both natural and man-made disasters and, therefore, experience tremendous losses. Hence, government intervention is imperative in the wake of the disaster. Government intervention has evolved in recent years from providing financial assistance to psychosocial interventions. In addition, psychosocial intervention is provided in the aftermath and prior to any disaster events by providing awareness, preparedness, and necessary knowledge and skills to society. Furthermore, improving preparedness for adverse events is one of the efforts to reduce disaster risk (UNISDR, 2009). The preparedness to handle oneself in the event of a disaster is necessary to minimise any disaster difficulties in the absence of immediate health and emergency responders.

Floods and landslides are two of the most frequent natural disasters in Indonesia. In the past few years, these natural disasters have increased tremendously due to human activities. Despite being a natural-based disaster, human activities such as uninhibited development and haphazard land clearings boost the severity of floods, particularly at the peak discharge and the time of concentration (Rahman, 2014).

This study seeks to identify the relationship between disaster preparedness intention, which refers to flood risks, and attitude, perceived behavioural control, and social norm. As a result of the high costs of disaster assistance and the resulting damage to social structure and social determinants, disaster behaviour studies have been conducted since 1940. Individual motivation determines intention, according to Ao et al. (2020), and intention in the disaster behaviour tendency study is linked between perception and behaviour. According to Najafi et al. (2017), there are three important aspects of motivational factors: attitude toward behaviour or the degree of evaluation of favourable or unfavourable behavior; social factors (perceived social pressure to implement or not implement the behaviour); and behavioural control (perceived ease or difficulty in showing behaviour). If an individual's attitude and subjective norms favour behaviour, the perceived behavioural control will be higher, and the person's desire to contemplate performing the behaviour will be higher. Vinnel, Milfont, and McClurec (2021) divided attitudes into two types: experiential attitudes based on experience
and instrumental attitudes based on consequence. In his research, Motoyoshi (2006) discovered a link between attitude and disaster preparedness objectives. The study found that how people perceive and accept disaster risk has an impact on how prepared they are for disasters. People who have a strong sense of self-responsibility accept flood hazards with ease.

In terms of the relationship between social norms and disaster preparedness intentions, social norms are defined as the impacts on an individual's behaviour that are based on what is considered typical by the individual's social group. The social norms have also been divided into injunctive norms, which deal with whether or not a behaviour is acceptable, and descriptive norms, which deal with the prevalence of the behaviour (Vinnel, Milfont, & McClurec, 2021). While self-efficacy, which is defined as confidence in performing a specific behaviour, such as overcoming hurdles to achieve a specific habit, can be used to examine the relationship between perceived behavioural control and disaster preparedness intentions, few studies were found in the context of developing countries to understand the behavioural factors in disaster preparedness. Mojtahedi & Oo (2012) revealed that a clear understanding of preparedness is important for future enhancement in reducing vulnerability and providing effective and accurate risk assistance.

2. Methodology

The analysis is applied using qualitative and quantitative research methods, which are embedded in the two methods. The respondents were collected from Indonesian students and international students from the diaspora in Thailand who joined the local wisdom “Making Batik of Indonesia” and “Pengajian for Moslem Diaspora Students in Thailand.” The UMY alumni who will eventually form the Diaspora Indonesia in Khon Kaen, Thailand, could start "Pengajian." This program could be named "Ngaji Thai Tea," which could be applied regularly. Introduction of local culture from Diaspora Indonesia to others Students union The program of introduction to local culture for making batik can be started by learning how to make batik patterns on a cloth sheet. We will define the meaning of the pattern of batik and the origin of the province. Then, the pattern is painted using a candle called “malam” based on the pattern. The instruments consist of ‘Malam’, a canthing, a small stove, and a pan to cook the wax of Malam. When the cloth is dyed in the first dye bath,. In this case, the first dyebath is indigo blue. The area of the cloth where the wax was applied in step 1 will remain white. The second application of wax has been made. In this case, it is a dark brown color. A poorer quality of wax is used to cover larger areas of cloth. The darker color helps to differentiate it from the first wax applied. Any parts that are covered with this wax application will remain indigo. The cloth is dyed in the second dye bath. In this stage, the color is navy blue. Any areas that are not covered by the wax will become dark blue. All the wax that has been applied thus far has been removed. This is done by heating the wax and scraping it off, as well as by applying hot water and sponging off the remaining wax. Wax is applied to the area of the fabric that the person wishes to remain the indigo blue colour. Wax is applied to the area of the fabric that the artist wishes to remain white. The fabric is submerged in the final dye bath. In this case, it is brown. Any areas of the cloth that have not been covered with wax will become brown. The finished cloth after all of the wax has been removed by boiling it in the boiling water. The batik applied to the cloth sheet will be introduced to the other student unions in ASEAN countries and also to the Diaspora Indonesia.

3 Results and Discussion

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About 25 international students from Khon Kaen University attended the meeting on April 10, 2023, and they came from a variety of nations, including Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia, Myanmar, and China. Most of the students are undergraduate and postgraduate students. The committee consists of Permitha (Persatuan Mahasiswa Indonesia di Thailand) members who also join “Making Batik.”. Before the session began, we delivered the pre-test concerning the participants On the session of the events, as follows:

1. **Introduction of Batik and how to make Batik**
   In the session on the introduction of Batik, I explained the history of Batik. Moreover, we share the type of batik in Indonesia, which has thousands of patterns of batik. During the introduction to everything concerning batik has been distributed via PowerPoint, as have three short movies on how to conduct batik. The response of all participants was excitement. During this session, we were also brought the traditional snacks to introduce to all international students, namely tempe chips, mlinjo chips, bakso goreng, and enting-enting.

2. **Making Pattern**
   After the introduction has been carried out approximately 30 minutes with Q&A with the participants, the host share a copy of pattern in A4 size and white cloth with size 20 x 20 cm. The host (UMY and Permitha) then assists the participants in the pattern-making for an additional 15 minutes. Each of the participants chose their own pattern based on their choice, and the pattern was the classic and traditional Batik pattern of Jogja.
After the making of the pattern is finished, the UMY lecture explains the dos and don'ts of waxing the pattern since it is dangerous and related to some working accidents.

3. Waxing the pattern
The first phase of making the batik is waxing the pattern. There were four pieces of equipment and 20 cans prepared for this phase. All the international students were gathering together in one room with the assistance of four facilitators to reduce the dangerous accidents during waxing.

4. Colouring
The colouring step has been carried out only by the UMY lecturer and one international student who is willing to help color. It prepares two colors, namely green and dark blue. After the colouring, the drying phase is carried out directly in the room.
After the event, the whole group of participants could bring their own batik as souvenirs. During this event, the community services team also completed the evaluation form in quantitative and qualitative. The participants decided to make batiks, which improved networking and connection between each diaspora. They also consented to a free meal and expressed their happiness at getting to know the Diaspora students in person. A quantitative evaluation was carried out before and after the batik-making event. Table 1 is the result of the knowledge gained concerning Batik and their social capital through the local wisdom approach. The comparison value of pre-test to post-test is increasing massively. Based on a
qualitative interview with a Vietnamese friend, she stated that this event is precious because they learn about the historic and legacy culture of Indonesia when everyone is well-known about Batik. Moreover, the International Relations Officer from KKU is expecting to have this event frequently in many countries.

Table 1. Pre- and post-test evaluation of the event.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator of Evaluation</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The symbolic meaning of Batik</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The meaning of parang batik motif</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The meaning of Kawung Batik Motif</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every Friday, Indonesian always use Batik</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants decided to make batiks, which improved networking and connection between each Diaspora. They also consented to a free meal and expressed their happiness at getting to know the Diaspora students in person. 15% of students disagree with batik making it feel like a family gathering because they can meet each other easily.

Table 2. Batik Making as a Strengthening of the social capital perspective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIAL CAPITAL</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local wisdom event could increase the connection and networking of Diaspora students</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Batik event could increase the emotional bonding.</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By having this event, we can feel family gathering to all Diaspora students</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By having this event, we can eat freely and meet directly with the Diaspora students</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am waiting this event just to meet and talk to the Indonesian Diaspora</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The international students in Thailand feel that having friends who surround each other could strengthen social capital. PERMITHA is an association of Indonesian students who are part of the Diaspora in Thailand and mostly play an important role as a family group, though they do not attend every PERMITHA event.

Table 3. Social capital level of the international diaspora in Thailand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIAL CAPITAL</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometime</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gathering together for the Indonesian diaspora makes me happy</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I feel sick or physically pain, I have my friend(s) who back me up</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I feel mentally ill, I have my friend(s) who support me.</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I attend PERMITHA’s event</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel PERMITHA is my family in here</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 Conclusion

Batik making is an event that is waiting for the international student diaspora in Thailand. Based on qualitative data from in-depth interviews, learning local wisdom from many countries is new and interesting for them. Moreover, the batik-making event not only brought benefit to international students in KKU but also gathered all the PERMITHA members. They also felt proud to introduce their heritage to other international diasporas. Intercultural connection through cultural knowledge and awareness could increase social capital (Collier, 2015).

References
