

# Digital Discourse on the “Kabur Aja Dulu” Narrative on X: Implications for Strategic Communication, Defense, and Diplomacy

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## **Abstract**

This study analyzes the “kaburjadulu (“Run Away First”) discourse as a form of digital public communication within Generation Z and government (officials and community leaders). Based on a multidisciplinary communication approach that integrates digital communication studies, political communication, media studies, and strategic communication, this study examines how narratives on X shape public perceptions and national discourse and generate implications for strategic communication, defense, and diplomacy. Using a mixed research method grounded in big data analytics and media content analysis, this study analyzes 180,115 conversations from 148,710 Twitter/X users of Indonesians aged 19 to over 50 years old and reports from three leading media of Detik, Kompas, and Tribun from December 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025. Based on sentiment analysis and Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA), the study finds that 42.7% of netizens express direct support for “running away.” It is primarily motivated by the desire to pursue work and an education overseas. While 7% explicitly intend to renounce their citizenship because there is no future in Indonesia. The government indirectly encourages this movement by appearing neutral and introspective. The study finds that the discourse demonstrates how digital narrative and digital solidarity are rooted in declining trust toward the government. The study highlights the role of media and online platforms in constructing strategic narratives that extend beyond individual expression into broader socio-political implications. These communicative processes have

important consequences for Indonesia's non-kinetic defense and diplomacy, particularly the potential normalization of brain drain, the weakening of the national identity narrative, social division, and the impact on Indonesia's international image and diaspora engagement. In the age of digital populism, the study suggests the significance of developing strategic communication, digital literacy, and public diplomacy narratives in order to reestablish trust and promote national resilience.

*Keywords:* Digital Communication, Political Communication, Public Diplomacy, Strategic Narratives, Non-Kinetic Defense

## **1. Introduction**

From December 2024 to March 2025, expressions of disappointment among Indonesian citizens over the living conditions they are facing have gone viral on the internet. This expression has been widely observed across social media platforms such as X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and TikTok, through the hashtag 'kaburajadulu' ("Run Away First"), with particular prominence on X, which serves as the primary data source in this study. The hashtag represents the frustration of the younger generation, known as Gen Z, with the new government led by Prabowo Subianto's economic, social, and political policies, which are perceived to be anti-society and unfair.

Despite the growing visibility of such digital expressions, there is still limited scholarly understanding of how online public sentiment translates into broader strategic consequences for the state. In particular, the linkage between digital discourse, migration aspirations, and their implications for national defense and diplomacy remains underexplored.

The expression of Indonesian citizens' disappointment with the government should not be considered as a minor issue since it can have a detrimental impact on the current government as well as the life of the nation and state in the short, medium, and long term. The potential negative impact arises as a result of users of this hashtag increasingly expressing encouragement or movements to take a break from Indonesian life by temporarily migrating (fleeing) abroad or even moving to another country due to Indonesia's uncomfortable conditions.

If the public's discontent with the government is not managed efficiently and correctly, it may generate resentment for the government and promote social division or fragmentation, endangering the country's defense. This viral hashtag has also captured the attention of individuals in various nations, including the Chinese mass media.

This phenomenon reveals how what happens in a country's internal affairs has an impact on its diplomacy in the form of an image.

Furthermore, the negative attention set by other media or foreigners may have an impact on the positive image of the Indonesian government overseas, reducing the credibility of Indonesia's diplomacy with other countries. It may even diminish other countries' willingness to invest in Indonesia's young generation.

The government's response to the viral hashtag tends to muddle because some comments from government officials appear insensitive. For example, the Deputy Minister of Manpower, Immanuel Ebenezer, even responded to the hashtag by stating his attitude as if he did not care about the source of the problem, "just run away, if necessary, don't come back" (Kompas, 2025). Meanwhile, Mr. Jusuf Kalla attempted to mitigate this statement of discontent by influencing public opinion so that the hashtag was understood positively. According to him, the view of the immense world will be achieved and encouraged by migrating to another country, rather than simply being silent in Indonesia tried to reduce this expression of disappointment by leading public opinion so that this hashtag was interpreted positively. According to him, it is precisely by moving to another country that the view of the vast world will be obtained and encourage progress, rather than just staying silent in Indonesia (Indonesia, 2025).

Hashtag kaburajadulu has developed into a cyberspace conversation forum for comparing living in Indonesia to other nations, as well as exchanging information about scholarships, job openings, and cultural adaptation issues. This phenomenon not only reflects the desire of some Indonesians, particularly the younger generation, to seek better life opportunities abroad, but it is also seen as a form of organic protest against social expectations that associate hard work with self-worth, as well as a satirical response to current socio-political conditions (Pos, 2025).

This movement exemplifies the younger generation's critical view of domestic situations that are seen as unfavorable, with the government perceived as "absent" in addressing many societal issues. Some experts even view #Kaburajadulu to be more than just the desire to seek a better life, but also symbolizes a human rights system that is considered to have failed to protect its citizens (Liputan6, 2025).

Furthermore, this trend raises concerns about the issue of "brain drain," in which skilled professionals opt to work elsewhere, which has the potential to undermine domestic economic and industrial stability. The government's response to this movement has likewise been varied, ranging from criticizing diaspora nationalism to emphasizing its potential impact on the national workforce. While some officials responded with cynicism,

others saw it as an opportunity to enhance strategic talent policies (Post, 2025).

Overall, the #kaburajadulu phenomenon illustrates Indonesia's complex social, economic, and political dynamics, as well as the government's huge issues in retaining young and skilled personnel in the face of discontent with local conditions. As a result, this phenomenon is not only a migratory issue, but it is a strategic discussion in Indonesia's national defense policy and diplomacy in the future. From a theoretical perspective, this study is situated at the intersection of the digital public sphere and non-traditional security frameworks. Digital discourse not only reflects public opinion but also shapes collective perceptions, trust in state institutions, and national identity, all of which are critical components of non-kinetic defense and international image formation.

Based on the identified gap between digital discourse studies and their strategic implications for state resilience, this study formulates the following research questions. First, what is the sentiment of Indonesians conveyed in the kaburajadulu hashtag on platform X? Second, how do officials and community leaders refer to the hashtag kaburajadulu in the news media? Third, how does the hashtag kaburajadulu impact Indonesia's national defense and diplomacy?

The hashtag kaburajadulu or "Run Away First", which represents people's desire to relocate from a particular region of a country to another, is directly tied to two key concepts: citizenship and brain drain. Each of these notions can be viewed from a variety of viewpoints, as explored in earlier studies.

Workers who have emigrated can serve as active agents, changing the course of international public relations. These migrants may challenge traditional notions of citizenship. The issue of brain drain can be seen from several perspectives. One viewpoint sees brain drain as a challenge to development that implies structural imbalances and even tensions between mobility and staying in place (rootedness) (Vega-Muñoz et al., 2025).

The emigration will certainly have an impact on the universal state defense system, which encourages participation by all citizens. Based on the mandate of the 1945 Constitution, all citizen are required to participate in the national defense program based on their different duties and functions, as well as their love for the country. Furthermore, the Indonesian citizens play an important role in promoting diplomacy and mutual trust in international relations (Buku Putih Pertahanan Indonesia 2015, 2015).

Several studies have attempted to identify the elements that induce brain drain. According to Vega-Muñoz et al (2025), the talented workforce

in 178 countries from 2006 to 2022 is driven by six factors: uneven economic development, poor quality of public services, external intervention, unheard voices and accountability, weak rule of law, and political instability (Vega-Muñoz et al., 2025). The absence of jobs that match workers' educational backgrounds can also induce emigration. While existing studies have extensively examined the drivers of migration and brain drain, they largely focus on economic and structural factors, with limited attention to the role of digital discourse in shaping migration intentions and its broader implications for national defense and diplomacy.

Intellectual emigration in Indonesia can also result from a combination of push and pull factors. According to research, digital expressions like the hashtag *kaburajadulu* are a driving force toward emigration. Other driving variables include socioeconomic disparities, insufficient research incentives, a lack of appreciation for competence, and unfavorable domestic economic and political situations. Meanwhile, the pull considerations include the existence of countries that offer employment prospects, research facilities, and a better professional environment, as well as political conditions. Meanwhile, the pull factors are the existence of countries that offer career opportunities and opportunities, research facilities and a better professional environment (Sari et al., 2025).

Several studies have examined the causes of professional migration, but few have addressed the impact, or potential impact of professional migration on a country's defense and diplomacy. The phenomenon *#Kaburajadulu* has developed as a unique challenge for Indonesia's national defense and diplomacy in the digital era, led by President Prabowo Subianto. Unlike previous social media trends or movements, which frequently involved debates between Indonesian citizens and citizens of other countries, this phenomenon focuses on internal dynamics within the country, particularly social dissatisfaction and the desire of Indonesian citizens to migrate abroad.

Against this background, this study aims to examine how the 'kabur aja dulu' discourse, expressed by Gen Z and reflected in both social media and media narratives, shapes implications for Indonesia's national defense and diplomacy. By integrating social media analysis and media content analysis, this study contributes to bridging the gap between digital discourse studies and international relations, particularly in understanding the link between online sentiment, migration aspirations, and state resilience. The findings are expected to offer both academic insights into the intersection of digital communication and security studies, as well as

practical implications for policy responses related to talent retention, public trust, and Indonesia's international image.

## 2. Method

This study employs a mixed-methods approach that integrates quantitative big data analysis and qualitative media content analysis to examine the #kaburajadulu discourse and its implications for Indonesia's national defense and diplomacy. The analysis draws on two primary data sources, namely social media data from X (formerly Twitter) and online news media from major Indonesian outlets, including Detik, Kompas, and Tribun, covering the period from December 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025.

Social media data were collected using keyword-based scraping techniques, focusing on terms related to "kabur aja dulu". To ensure data relevance and quality, the dataset was filtered based on language (Indonesian), keyword frequency, and engagement indicators such as retweets, replies, and likes. Data cleaning procedures were conducted, including the removal of duplicates and spam content. In total, the dataset consists of 180,115 interactions generated by 148,710 unique accounts. News articles were selected based on their relevance to the topic, publication within the same time frame, and their coverage of public discourse or official responses.

To enhance data validity, bot detection procedures were applied using a machine learning-based classification approach adapted from previous studies. Accounts were identified as potentially suspicious based on criteria such as account age, unusually high posting frequency, and abnormal interaction patterns. While prior studies report accuracy levels of approximately 86% (Abdillah et al., 2016), in this study, the model is employed as a filtering mechanism rather than a definitive classification tool, and the results are interpreted with caution.

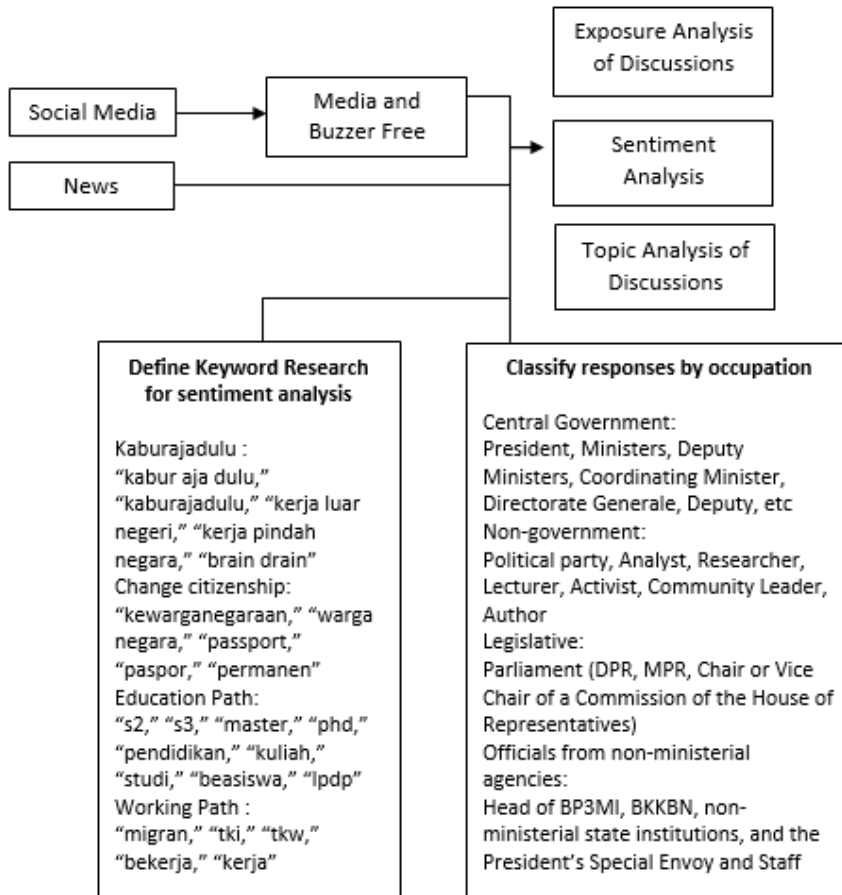
Sentiment analysis was conducted using a Multi-Task Deep Neural Network (MT-DNN) with a sentence classification approach, categorizing data into positive, negative, and neutral sentiments. The model is based on pre-trained language representations and adapted to Indonesian-language data. Its performance refers to established benchmarks, including a GLUE score of approximately 82.7% (Liu et al., 2020), and follows standard supervised learning procedures in natural language processing.

To identify dominant themes within the discourse, Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) was employed as a topic modeling technique. This method enables the extraction of latent topics based on word distribution patterns across the dataset. The number of topics was determined through coherence score evaluation, and each topic was interpreted based on its most representative keywords, allowing the identification of key narratives related to migration, dissatisfaction, and policy discourse.

In addition to quantitative analysis, qualitative media content analysis was conducted to examine how the phenomenon is framed by news media and

public officials. A thematic coding approach was applied to categorize narratives into key dimensions, including government responses, public framing, and policy implications. The coding process was conducted iteratively, with categories refined through repeated reading and cross-checking to ensure consistency.

The overall analytical process integrates three main dimensions: conversation exposure, sentiment patterns, and topic distribution. These dimensions are combined to assess how digital discourse evolves into broader implications for national defense and diplomacy. The workflow of the research process, from data collection to analysis, is illustrated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Research Flowchart  
 Source: prepared by the author

This study adheres to ethical standards in digital research. All data used is publicly available, and no personally identifiable information is disclosed. User data were anonymized during analysis, and the study complies with platform terms of service, ensuring responsible use of digital data.

### 3. Results

The findings indicate that the #kaburajadulu discourse is shaped by a combination of informational exchange, aspirational narratives, and structural concerns. The dominance of information-sharing suggests the emergence of digital solidarity networks that facilitate migration-related knowledge dissemination.

At the same time, the relatively small proportion of opposing views indicates limited counter-narrative capacity within the online discourse. Public figures, however, provide a more balanced framing, highlighting both opportunities and risks.

These results suggest that the phenomenon cannot be understood solely as a spontaneous social media trend, but rather as a structured discourse reflecting broader socio-economic conditions, migration aspirations, and perceptions of state performance.

#### 3.1 The sentiment of the Indonesians in the hashtag kaburajadulu on platform X

Based on the data gathered from X, it is clear that there are fluctuations in the debate concerning the phenomenon of the hashtag kaburajadulu throughout the research period. As seen in the graphic below, throughout the research period, two peak periods were observed: Peak 1 on January 13-15, 2025 and Peak 2 on February 9-16, 2025.



**Figure 2.** Two peak periods  
Source: prepared by the author

Based on 180,155 conversations, 42.7% agree to want to run away, while those who are against or forbid running away are 7.5%. As can be seen in Figure 3, the majority of the conversations, which are almost 50% or 49.7% to be precise, only share views, experiences of living abroad, and job vacancy information.



**Figure 3.** Categorization of Discussion Topics  
Source: prepared by the author

Although the number of groups sharing information about kaburajadulu is not equal to 50%, this group has the ability to open, deepen, and enlarge the space for the propagation of community unrest. As a result, netizens' desire to escape will grow. There is an attempt to encourage the group sentiment to vote "just run away." Meanwhile, counter groups that encourage people not to run away are considered to be less capable of balancing the dominating flow of conversation.

The support groups strive to provide information on career prospects, scholarships, skill preparation recommendations, true stories of migration experiences, and mutual support. The discussions that were discovered demonstrate that worry meets social solidarity and hope.

The most commonly discussed issue is information about vacancies and job prospects, which represents approximately 41.7%. The information given pertains to job openings, programs, or scholarships overseas that are available to anyone. The purpose of this content is to help netizens "run away."

In addition to information, the sharing group offered ideas for preparation and skill improvement. This group represents 22.1% of all conversations. The discussion focused on technical tips or motivation for preparing for the run away, starting with learning the language, increasing abilities, preparing documents, and mental preparation.

Throughout the conversations examined, there were groups that expressed questions, anxieties, and genuine barriers to escape. The conversation centered on the high cost of living overseas, emotional stress, and security threats abroad. The image below depicts some of the opposing arguments for the Kaburajadulu movement. This demonstrates that the decision to "run away first" is not as straightforward as we believe, nor is it just wishful thinking.

Reality issues and the hardships of living overseas are among the reasons that 38.4% do not support "run away." In this scenario, the factors to consider for the financial rewards conversation demonstrate that the destination country is no better off than the place of origin.

Furthermore, a number of concerns develop, including layoffs, loneliness, work pressure, and global instability, such as conflicts.

Another barrier issue was the emotional dimension, which was expressed by around 16.6%. The conversation turns to the severe burden of migration, which requires them to abandon their families. Other emotional considerations include remorse, homesickness, and protection for their families, which urge individuals to stay in the country.

Another reason mentioned was the cost of migration of “run away.” As much as 10.3% of netizens claimed that financial constraints were the primary reason for not supporting the kaburajadulu movement. This exchange revealed that not everyone has access to funds, connections or expertise. Relocating prices, rental costs, legal document costs, and preparing the initial cost for relocating were also discussed, all of which are considered quite high. The following is an example of a conversation that addresses this issue.

Based on the data gathered from the conversations that occurred, it is clear that support for the hashtag kaburajadulu stems not just from a desire to leave, but also from the promise of a better life. Netizens stated that the underlying reasons for hashtag support were financial, enthusiasm for progress, and discontent with domestic situations. Topic of discussions of reasons #kaburajadulu are: financial and professional benefits (22.3%), hope and motivation to relocate (16.7%), public facilities and quality of life (7.7%), criticism of the government (6.3%), supportive community (6%), educational pathways and skill development (4,7%), realism, not anti-nationalism (4,2%), and the reality of the job market in Indonesia (4,2%).

Factors to consider for financial rewards, and possibilities; 22.3% of netizen’s discusses the professional environment. According to this group, many people regard foreign countries as place with higher-valued job values. In terms of pull factors, the primary appeal from overseas is the offer of a higher wage and a better work-life balance.

Meanwhile, 16.7% of netizens expressed a shared enthusiasm, hope, and desire to “move up” in life. Optimism dominates the conversation, and there is a collective determination to live a better life. Although not everyone feels materially prepared to “run away,” netizens are eager to confine learning and developing.

A percentage of netizens, 7.7%, believe that the destination country cares more about its residents than the country of origin does for itself. Factors that enable a better living, such as the presence of public amenities, transit systems, and social safety, are regarded as better and have the possibility for a peaceful life, and do not burden the conversation with reasons to “run away.”

The reason for fleeing includes both a pull factor from the destination country and a negative push factor from the place of origin. A total of 6.3% of netizens expressed support for running away because of discontent with numerous incidents of corruption, inequity in public policy, and unfairness in various other areas. Support for the hashtag “run away first” is not a declaration of hatred for the state, but rather a voice of dissatisfaction with the government. In other words, the kaburajadulu hashtag movement is a response to the system’s stagnation and failure, rather than a personal or anti-nationalist remark.

Based on the data gathered, the countries that became the destination of the “run away first” turned out to be quite close to Indonesia, specifically East and Southeast Asian countries such as Japan, South Korea, and Singapore. The hashtag kaburajadulu sounds spontaneous and emotional, but the destination countries mentioned in social media conversations follow a very similar trend.

Meanwhile, data on the number of Indonesians who have migrated and become diaspora in other countries indicates that the Asian and Middle Eastern regions are the most popular destinations for Indonesians. The Indonesian diaspora is concentrated in the region. Malaysia is the most popular destination country, with over 2.5 million Indonesian citizens, followed by Saudi Arabia, which has over 850 thousand Indonesian citizens living there. China, Singapore, the UAE, and Qatar are among the top ten nations where the Indonesian diaspora lives.

Netizens stated that “run away first” was motivated by the desire to obtain a job (79,5%) and study overseas (20,5%). In total, 79.5% of the conversations indicated the job path as the most important consideration. This is due to the state of the Indonesian job market, which is regarded as slow, inequitable, and unequal. Widespread layoffs, low earnings, and a lack of work stability are all contributing issues. Working overseas, according to netizens, is the quickest and most practical way to raise one’s standard of living.

Furthermore, 20.5% of the total conversation chose for educational opportunities, such as scholarships, student exchanges, or work study programs. This option is frequently selected by individuals who have not met the standards for immediate employment or who want to establish a long-term career through skill development.

To achieve this objective, netizens share updates regarding illicit routes, which typically involve warnings and rejections. Netizens warned each other not to take unapproved routes, as many ended up becoming victims.

According to the data acquired, up to 93% of netizens show an intention to “run away first” without specifying a permanent destination. However, 7% publicly acknowledged their desire to change their nationality. Although the percentage is small, it cannot be dismissed as inconsequential because it shows that some people have no intention of “going home” and instead intend to permanently dissolve their citizenship links. Thus, for this group, kaburajadulu is more than simply a short escape; it represents a loss of hope for the place of origin.

Netizens who express a desire to change citizenship believe they no longer have room to grow in their own country. Obstacles to global mobility, disillusionment with the government, economic pressure, and other individual factors all contribute to this. Discomfort is not just a factor, but it also contributes to their life certainty demands, which must be satisfied.

Some examples of the following discourse show how netizens opt to alter their citizenship due to issues with their documentation, such as Indonesian passports. A total of 25.9% of netizens complained about Indonesian passport issues. Another issue is that obtaining a visa can be complex, time-consuming, and costly. Indonesian netizens also believe that many other nations are more suspicious and stricter toward Indonesian passport holders since they abuse numerous visas (for example, to stay illegally).

Another motive for shifting citizenship was disillusionment with Indonesians. A total of 24.5% of netizens are pessimistic about the state of the country. Their reasons include distrust in the government, systematic corruption, and policies viewed as unfair or discriminatory. Thus, they expect that changing citizenship will help them survive.

### **3.2 Officials' and Community Leaders' Reactions to the Hashtag kaburajadulu phenomenon in the News Media**

The data obtained in this study is not only related to the sentiment of Indonesians in the kaburajadulu Hashtag on the Twitter/X platform, but also to the sentiments of officials and community leaders in response to the kaburajadulu hashtag phenomenon as reported in the news. The media platform includes content from Detik, Kompas, and Tribun News from December 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025.

### **3.3 Public Figures' Attitudes toward #kaburajadulu Phenomenon**

Public figures had diverse reactions to the hashtag kaburajadulu. The important aspects of their statements are as follows: the significance of thorough planning when relocating or opting to work overseas (21,9 %), including skill mastery and mental readiness. Public figures also underlined migrant workers' right to express themselves and achieve their

goals (17,8 %). They emphasized the necessity of understanding legal requirements and procedures before relocating (13,7%) as well as being aware of economic conditions and job opportunities (13,7 %). Other topics include nationalism (11%), social criticism (11 %), and security and risk issues (5,5%).

Based on the collected data, three categories of public figures' attitudes toward the kaburajadulu phenomenon may be identified: neutral, rejection, and support. The depiction in Figure 4 shows that the majority of them (44.1%) have a neutral attitude, which allows for dialogue and critical evaluation. The number of public personalities that favor it is likewise relatively high (41.2%). This highlights the significance of planning and protection for migratory workers. However, the percentage of public personalities who opposed the number reached 14.7%, indicating a minority voting group. This serves as a warning of hazards and obstacles that have yet to be fully resolved. A similar phenomenon occurs in the dynamics of social media.



**Figure 4.** 34 Public Figures Statement

Source: prepared by the author

Various statements demonstrate the impartial attitude resulting from Public Figures' utterances. Among them, public leaders stressed that the decision to leave the country must be based on mature reasoning. According to the statement submitted, prominent personalities generally respect each individual's rights. The public emphasized the necessity of preparation and legality before changing nations, as well as understanding the destination country's potential hazards and problems. One neutral perspective regarding the hashtag kaburajadulu is to emphasize the need to create a space for debate and solutions.

The rejecting attitude resulting from public figures' words can be found in a variety of statements. The figures' view #kaburajadulu as a negative statement. The public leaders' statements underlined the necessity of civic responsibility. Public personalities also define nationalism as a commitment to survival and development.

Some public figures who promote the hashtag kaburajadulu interpret this desire as a right to depart. They attempt to protect individual rights, which emphasizes the importance of policy review. Public personalities recognize that international experience is key; they do not

attempt to link migration or movement with anti-nationalism. Legislators who serve as people's representatives can be in close contact with their constituents. The backing of these parliamentarians demonstrates a readiness to deal with popular unrest, particularly among the younger population. Legislators have a political interest in demonstrating that they are on the side of the people, even while criticizing the executive branch. It is clear that officials from organizations such as Badan Perlindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia/BP2MI (Indonesian Migrant Workers Protection Agency) are focused on program implementation, such as workforce placement or human resource development.

Based on the data collected and analyzed, the votes against this movement were extremely small and tended to decline. Only 7.5% of netizens attempted to present a counter-narrative or urged them to stay. Meanwhile, a total of 42.7% of netizens expressed support for the hashtag. This demonstrates that netizens are extremely interested in moving. The primary consideration in making this decision is the conversation expressed by 49.7% of netizens, which can play an important role in spreading unrest and establishing solidarity. This group encourages free conversation and helps to normalize the concept of "just run away" as a solution to societal problems.

According to this study, the majority of netizens, 49.7%, are active in the formation of digital solidarity within the Kaburajadulu movement. Topics discussed, such as job openings and scholarships overseas, skill preparation recommendations, personal experience, and motivation, demonstrate that the concept of "run away first" is not an occasional trend but a serious and deliberate strategy for many people. beneficial in life. Furthermore, some public

Netizens believe that another country is a more promising location in terms of finances, living conditions, and global mobility. Discontent with the Indonesian government is another significant factor. East and Southeast Asian countries such as Japan, South Korea, and Singapore are popular travel destinations. However, in addition to optimal performance, netizens demonstrated real-world issues in the target country, such as layoffs, work pressure, or global instability. Emotional factors, high costs, and cultural adaptability are all impediments that prevent some people from leaving.

The option to support the kaburajadulu movement was motivated by a desire to both find work and further their studies. Netizens are also aware of the possibility of illicit threats in the form of job and education paths that might lead to exploitation. Netizens also underlined that the

desire to emigrate does not imply hatred for the country, but rather a means of survival in a system that does not guarantee the future.

The vast majority of netizens, 93%, claimed that they merely wanted to “run away,” while 7% specifically stated that they wanted to change their citizenship because they no longer had hope in the country. The driving factors include weak Indonesian passports, discontent with the government, and economic difficulties.

Public figures were also taking part in reacting to the hashtag #kaburajadulu. The number of people who have declared a neutral or supportive stance is fairly balanced. 44.1% of public figures are neutral, while 41.2% are supporters. Meanwhile, the rejection rate among public figures was low, at 14.7%. Public leaders with a neutral perspective frequently emphasize the significance of creating room for discourse, prudence, and careful thinking before making choices.

Public figures who opposed the movement saw it as a sign of desperation, emphasizing the value of nationalism. Public leaders who voice support often emphasize the necessity of supporting each individual decision because it is a personal right. The relocation can be viewed as an effort to broaden experience and assess domestic policies.

In general, the majority of public figures (21.9%) underlined the significance of careful planning before relocating, while 17.8% stated the importance of freedom of expression. Legislators and non-ministerial officials expressed support, but central government and non-government leaders remained neutral.

## **4. Discussion**

### **4.1 How do the kaburajadulu Hashtags affect Indonesia’s National Defense and Diplomacy?**

The digital #kaburajadulu movement that has emerged among Indonesian netizens not only expresses discontent with domestic social and economic conditions, but it also creates a larger space for analysis of its strategic implications for Indonesia’s national defense and diplomacy. This phenomenon demonstrates how individual goals, which were formerly personal and emotional. Have evolved into societal currents capable of influencing collective perception, inter-country interactions, and Indonesia’s standing in the global environment.

Within the framework of state defense, the potential waves of educated migration may have an impact on strategic human resource capabilities and national values. Meanwhile, diplomatically, this dynamic has a direct impact on Indonesia’s global image, the management of bilateral migration issues, and the diaspora’s status as a source of soft

power. As a result, it is critical to deconstruct the influence of this movement carefully using two primary frameworks: national defense and foreign diplomacy, in order to comprehend the risks and possibilities that arise and formulate strategic initiatives that the government must take.

#### ***4.1.1. Impact on State Defense***

The kaburajadulu movement has the potential to weaken the country's resilience in three ways: the threat of brain drain to strategic human resources, a shift in the value of nationalism among the younger generation, and social fragmentation fueled by digital solidarity in the absence of a counter-narrative from the state.

##### *4.1.1.1 Rethinking "Brain Drain" as Discursive Aspiration*

The kaburajadulu campaign has shown potential for major risks to the country's defense, particularly in terms of strategic human resources. According to research, 42.7% of netizens explicitly supported this movement, while 12 49.7% actively shared information, experiences, and opportunities that enhanced migration intentions.

This figure illustrates the general public's strong desire to live abroad, particularly among the younger age group. If not managed properly, this might result in the brain drain problem, which is the migration of educated professionals to nations that are deemed more economically and socially promising, particularly in East and Southeast Asia, such as Japan, South Korea, and Singapore.

The implications of this condition are significant. Indonesian anticipates losing young talents, professionals, and highly educated people who should be the backbone of national development. In the long run, this will reduce the country's ability to confront global issues such as digital transformation, economic competition, and strategic technological development. (Sarjito, 2025). Given that intellectual migrants are typically key players in the research and development sector, brain drain can also undermine national innovation capacity.

In particular, within the framework of universal state defense, which requires that all citizens play a role in protecting sovereignty, the loss of outstanding human resources weakens national resilience in military, social, economic, and technological terms. According to the 2015 Indonesian Defense White Paper, every person is required to participate in the national defense program based on his or her role and function (Buku Putih Pertahanan Indonesia 2015, 2015). When the productive generation prefers to establish a future abroad, the state's ability to defend itself against non-traditional threats erodes. In this context, brain drain is more than just a migration issue; it is a strategic threat to national independence and resilience in the age of globalization.

While the findings show a relatively high proportion of users expressing interest in working or studying abroad, these expressions should not be directly equated with actual migration behavior. Instead, they reflect what can be described as “aspirational mobility”, a concept widely discussed in migration studies. The data indicate that motivations are shaped by both push factors (e.g., dissatisfaction with domestic conditions) and pull factors (e.g., perceived opportunities abroad). However, the presence of constraints—such as financial limitations, emotional considerations, and perceived risks—suggests that migration remains conditional rather than inevitable. Therefore, rather than confirming an immediate “brain drain,” the findings point to a discursive environment where migration is normalized as a possible pathway, particularly among digitally active users. This has indirect implications for long-term human capital dynamics, but such implications remain contingent and cannot be inferred causally from the data.

#### *4.1.1.2 Challenges to Nationalist Values*

In the midst of widespread support for the kaburajadulu campaign, there are serious risks to nationalist principles, particularly among the young generation. According to the research, 93% of netizens express a desire to “run away first” – i.e., migrate temporarily – without expressing hatred towards the country. However, 7% of netizens openly announce their plan to change their citizenship, indicating a lack of hope for the country’s future. This situation represents a tension between discontent with the government and allegiance to the nation, which has long served as the foundation of civic identity.

The younger generation, as the group most affected by national policies and political processes, began to doubt the value of their participation in a state system that was viewed as failing to satisfy expectations. According to experts, this tendency is more than just economic migration; it is also a preference for a system that is regarded as unfair and unaccommodating to people’s goals (Liputan6, 2025). They no longer define nationalism conventionally, but see it as something that must be capable of ensuring welfare, justice, and a decent future.

Their discontent is not a sort of betrayal, but rather a critique of a system that is perceived to be insensitive to citizens’ genuine concerns. In this framework, nationalism’s value rests somewhere between passive allegiance and critical nationalism. If not handled seriously, this phenomenon can accelerate the deterioration of national identity. In accordance with this, the reaction to this movement demonstrates the need for a more contemplative, inclusive, and evolutionary national narrative. (Post, 2025).

As a result, the state must create a new narrative about nationalism, one that is more than just jargon for allegiance to the state symbol, but rather a common commitment to creating a system that is fair, inclusive, and capable of meeting the problems of the day. This narrative must address the realities of young people, such as access to jobs, a quality education, and involvement in policymaking. Only in this way can nationalism regain its vitality and relevance in society.

#### *4.1.1.3 Potential for Social Fragmentation via Digital Solidarity*

One of the most notable effects of the #KaburAjaDulu campaign is the emergence of social fragmentation, which is strengthened by digital solidarity. According to the data collected, approximately 49.7% of netizens fall into the “sharing: group, which does not support or oppose but actively communicates information about migration opportunities, personal experiences, and “run away first” preparation tips. This group has created an ecosystem of support that has helped to improve the quality of life. This hashtag has become an extension of the discourse on migration while also increasing the collective intention to leave the nation in response to the sociopolitical instability.

This digital solidarity provides a platform for articulating collective unrest, in which netizens feel freer to voice their desires than in the formal governmental sphere. In the absence of replies to counter-narratives from the state, the horizontal communication pattern on social media normalizes the concept of “run away first” as a logical and pragmatic alternative. Studies have demonstrated that social media may build powerful virtual communities – places to support each other and share experiences. However, it has the potential to produce “echo chambers” that reinforce narrow viewpoints and weaken healthy discourse.

Strategically, this condition poses a significant risk of societal fragmentation between those who feel alienated and those who opt to pursue life chances abroad. This polarization not only affects social ties, but it also creates a narrative gap between the state and its citizenry. Without answers that recognize and welcome their digital goals, social cohesion as a foundation for non-military defense will continue to erode. In the long run, this social fragmentation based on digital solidarity has the potential to pose a severe threat to national stability, as it undermines confidence between citizens and official institutions.

## **4.2 The Impact on Indonesian Diplomacy**

In terms of international relations, the #KaburAjaDulu movement has a variety of implications for Indonesian diplomacy, ranging from changing perceptions of the country’s image in the eyes of the world, new dynamics in bilateral relations related to migration issues, and the strategic

role of the diaspora as a diplomatic actor, which can have a positive or negative impact depending on how they are involved and managed by the state.

#### **4.2.1 Indonesia's International Image**

The kaburajadulu phenomenon demonstrates a crisis of public trust in the state's ability to provide for its citizens. Many netizens expressed an interest in other countries that are regarded as more professional, stable, and offer a collective sign of anger with the country's socioeconomic realities, particularly among the younger population.

The reaction of the foreign media reinforced the negative image. International media, including the Financial Times, says that a wave of criticism of Indonesia's education budget and socioeconomic gaps, represented in the hashtags "DarkIndonesia" and "kaburajadulu," reflects significant public dissatisfaction with the national media system.

This perception could damage Indonesia's diplomatic image and reputation as a stable country prepared to become a strategic partner in international cooperation. In modern diplomacy, a country's home reputation, particularly how it treats its own population, is an essential component of its external image. When citizens express a strong desire to leave or change citizenship, the outside world can conclude that the country is facing internal conflicts and a crisis of social legitimacy.

The diplomatic implications of this are significant. Indonesia has been developing a reputation as a stable, tolerant, and economically powerful democracy. However, the emergence of digital movements indicating a loss of hope for the domestic future destabilizes this narrative. This also has an impact on the competitiveness of the national image in several global soft power indices, such as the Global Soft Power Index 2025, which ranks Indonesia 45th, a drop from the previous year. As a result, a public diplomacy strategy is required to re-establish trust, both within and outside of Indonesia, that the country is still worth living in, growing, and working with.

Therefore, while digital discourse may contribute to reputational narratives, it should not be treated as a direct indicator of national image decline. Instead, it highlights the importance of public diplomacy strategies that engage with domestic audiences as well as international perceptions.

#### **4.2.2 Implications for Bilateral Relations and Migration Issues**

The phenomenon of the kaburajadulu movement demonstrates a strong trend toward East and Southeast Asia countries as the primary migration destinations, including Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. This also highlights the fact that many of these young

people migrate for better employment, education, and quality of life opportunities.

If this trend continues, the opportunities for professional migration to these countries of interest will grow even more. In a bilateral context, Indonesia should enhance talks on visas, working hours, legal protection, licensing, and migrant worker placement standards. If not managed properly, the rise in migration can lead to new issues such as exploitation and legal confusion for migrant workers. In the future, Indonesia must improve the international cooperation framework that ensures migrant rights and fair treatment of the diaspora.

#### **4.2.3 The Diaspora's Potential as Diplomatic Actors: Positive and Negative**

The phenomenon of *kaburajadulu* has the potential to raise the number of Indonesian diaspora abroad while also redefining the diaspora's role as strategic actors in diplomacy. Positively, the diaspora can work as cultural and economic ambassadors, promoting the transfer of knowledge, technology, and reinvestment to the homeland. The diaspora has enormous potential to strengthen national economic resilience through remittances, investment, and economic diplomacy if properly incorporated into national policies (Hamdani & Puspitasari, 2025).

However, if the diaspora is developed primarily due to discontent or disillusionment with the treatment, it may become a source of criticism on the international stage. These risks project a diplomatic image of a dilemma: the diaspora is no longer merely diplomats, but also ideological critics overseas. To mitigate these risks, the government must adopt a diaspora diplomacy approach that is both supervisory and participatory, involving them strategically in policymaking, cultural promotion, and national development planning.

This kind of diaspora diplomacy approach must be comprehensively integrated into Indonesia's foreign policy and soft power strategy. In this context, it is worth noting that the diaspora can be viewed as a long-term diplomatic and economic asset, particularly if it is managed through instruments such as centralized databases, formal involvement of diaspora institutions, and inclusive citizenship politics, all of which can strengthen the spirit of nationalism while preserving diplomatic relations.

#### **4.3. Limitations of the Study**

This study has several important limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the data are derived primarily from X (Twitter), which represents a specific segment of the population, particularly younger and urban users. As such, the findings cannot be generalized to the Indonesian population as a whole. Second, the analysis is based on

expressed sentiment, which does not necessarily correspond to actual behavior, including migration decisions. Third, sentiment analysis and topic modeling techniques have inherent limitations, including potential misclassification and sensitivity to language context. Fourth, the observation period (December 2024–March 2025) is relatively short, limiting the ability to capture longer-term trends. These limitations suggest that the findings should be interpreted as indicative of digital discourse patterns rather than definitive evidence of structural societal change.

## **5. Conclusion**

This study set out to examine (1) the sentiment of Indonesians expressed through the #kaburajadulu discourse on X, (2) how public officials and community leaders respond to this phenomenon in the media, and (3) how such digital discourse relates to Indonesia's national defense and diplomacy.

The findings indicate that the discourse is not dominated solely by protest or rejection, but largely by information-sharing, which functions as a mechanism for exchanging knowledge, experiences, and opportunities related to migration. Expressions of support and intention to migrate are also significant, while opposing views remain limited. At the same time, media narratives show that public figures tend to adopt neutral and cautious positions, emphasizing preparation, legality, and awareness of risks.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the #kaburajadulu phenomenon should not be interpreted simplistically as a direct threat to national defense or diplomacy. Instead, it reflects a more complex form of digital public expression in which dissatisfaction, aspiration, and practical adaptation intersect. In this sense, the study contributes to the broader literature by demonstrating that digital discourse can shape perceptions and narratives about mobility and state performance without necessarily translating into immediate behavioral or structural consequences.

At the same time, several limitations need to be acknowledged. The analysis relies primarily on data from X, which represents a specific and demographically skewed segment of the population, particularly younger and urban users. Moreover, sentiment analysis cannot fully capture contextual nuance and does not directly correspond to actual migration behavior. The relatively short observation period also limits the ability to identify long-term patterns. These constraints indicate that the findings should be interpreted as indicative of digital discourse dynamics rather than definitive evidence of broader societal change.

Building on these limitations, future research should expand both the scope and methodological depth of analysis. Further studies could incorporate multi-platform data, extend the temporal scope, and combine computational analysis with qualitative approaches such as interviews or surveys to better understand the relationship between online expression and real-world decision-making. Comparative studies across different national contexts may also help to situate this phenomenon within broader global patterns of digital migration narratives.

In terms of practical implications, the findings suggest the importance of more targeted and context-sensitive policy responses. Rather than broad generalizations, efforts could focus on strengthening public communication strategies that engage digital discourse constructively, improving responsiveness to socio-economic concerns raised by younger populations, and enhancing governance frameworks related to labor mobility and migrant protection. These measures should be understood as adaptive responses aligned with observed discourse patterns, rather than as definitive policy prescriptions.

Overall, the #kaburajadulu discourse highlights the growing significance of digital platforms in shaping how citizens articulate aspirations, critique state performance, and imagine future mobility. Rather than constituting a direct indicator of national decline, the phenomenon underscores the need to better understand the relationship between digital narratives, public perception, and policy engagement in an increasingly interconnected world.

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