

# Educational Value in “Merantau” Culture of Minangkabau Ethnic, Indonesia

Ismira, Ahman, Mamat Supriatna

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Author Correspondence

Ismira  
STKIP Adzkia  
Jalan Taratak Paneh No. 7, Kota  
Padang, Sumatera Barat, Indonesia  
Email: ismira70@yahoo.co.id,

Ahman  
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia  
Jalan Setiabudi 229 Bandung, Jawa  
Barat, Indonesia  
Email: ahman@upi.edu.

Mamat Supriatna  
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia  
Jalan Setiabudi 229 Bandung, Jawa  
Barat, Indonesia  
Email: ma2t.supri@gmail.com

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## ABSTRACT

*The present study was aimed at discovering the educational values of Minangkabaunese's merantau culture to be used as educational content, particularly in career guidance and counseling. The educational values were dug from saying and poem of Minangkabau Ethnic, which affecting the Minangkabaunese perantau such as mindset, attitude, and behavior. This was categorized as realist ethnographic qualitative study. The subject of the study was a Minangkabaunese figure. The data were collected by using an in-depth interview with interview guideline and literature study. The data were analyzed using data triangulation and ethnographic information regarding Minangkabau's Merantau and ideographic data from Minangkabaunese' success figure. The finding of the study showed that in Minangkabau's Merantau Culture, there are four educational values namely the value of career success, knowledge and experiences, mental and social resilience, and the value of life skill. This can be used as a reference in constructing local wisdom-based career guidance and counseling at school.*

*Keywords: merantau culture, educational value, minangkabau ethnic*

## INTRODUCTION

Cultural value-based education becomes the Indonesian government concern. It is shown by the issuance of policy on "Culture advancement." This policy is based on the awareness of cultural diversity as the national identity and wealth. They are required to advance the national culture. Indonesia consists of thousands of ethnic groups; each of them holds their own unique culture. Every culture contains its own value, which potentially affects its community personality. Cultural based study is needed to explore the local wisdom that can be potentially used as educational content. Although there have been many studies

conducted, compared to the number of the ethnic group in Indonesia, the number of culture-based research is not significant to discover the educational value of each ethnic group's culture.

Minangkabau culture of merantau (out-migration) is one of the cultures known as capable of creating a success figure with good quality performance. Minang people are known as persistent migrants who never give up and work hard. The quality of their performance is affected by the local wisdom contained in various sayings and poems regarding merantau. Some studies about Merantau are done by Tsuyoshi Kato (Japanese Researcher) since 1972 who

study about the effect of matrilineality on Minangkabau migration culture. A study conducted by Welsa (2012) on Minangkabau Culture and its implementation in Padang Restaurant in Yogyakarta, and the study conducted by Marta (2014) which study on the Construction of Cultural Building of Merantau among the school counselor.

Merantau means leaving hometown to go to other places to seek for a better life. Many people in the world do it, but in Minangkabau ethnic, merantau has its own characteristic, first, it becomes a culture from generation to generation. This becomes a recommended activity and is taught in various Minangkabau cultural teaching. Third, unwittingly, there is a hidden curriculum that teaches values and manners in books, starting from pre-merantau until post-merantau. Fourth, Minangkabau's merantau is written in many books, studied by many scholars, and even become a movie. Due to its uniqueness, it is interesting to draw its educational value.

Based on the description above, the present study aims at discovering the educational values of Minangkabau' merantau culture to be used as educational content, particularly in Career Guidance and Counseling. This can be used as a reference in constructing local wisdom-based career guidance and counseling at school.

## METHODS

This was categorized as realist ethnographic qualitative study. The subject of the study was a Minangkabaunese figure. The data were collected by using an in-depth interview with interview guideline and literature study. The data were analyzed using data triangulation and ethnographic information regarding Minangkabau's Merantau and ideographic data from Minangkabaunese' success figure.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section describes the interview result with Minangkabau figure and the result of literature study in Minangkabau merantau culture. The Minangkabaunese figure in this

study is Mr. Vivery Yudi. He works in Aditiawarman Museum, Padang. He is the initiator of art event in Taman Budaya Kota Padang, He is a lecturer in some university and actively write Minangkabau culture and tradition in various mass media.

In the past, merantau is usually done by Minangkabau men. This is the reason why the success figure from Minangkabau is dominated by man. In the past, the woman went merantau because she followed her husband. Minangkabau migrant, when he has been financially settled, usually return to their home to take his wife to live in his place. Some success figure from Minangkabau in the past are M.Hatta, Sutan Syahrir, Buya Hamka, and many more.

One of the factors encouraging Minangkabau men to migrate is Minangkabau's matrilineality. It means that inheritance is inherited to the woman.

Since men do not have an inheritance to support them and their family, Minangkabau men tend to leave their hometown (merantau). Minangkabau people' motivation of merantau tends to be affected by economic motives. Minangkabau males migrate in a financially difficult condition. The Minangkabau male is called as "Batulang salapan karek." It means that "to work hard to fulfill his needs and reach autonomy."

Merantau is likened to sail the ocean of life and adventure. Their success is greatly determined by their ability in reading nature symbol so that they can anticipate the condition. The ability to read nature sign is stated in Minangkabau aphorism "*Alam Takambang Jadi Guru*." For minang people, rantau is a life experience. Merantau changes an individual by micro cosmos (internal value changes), macro cosmos (external physical changes such as settlement, social life, and economic condition), and meta cosmos (religious life).

The value of "*Alam Takambang Jadi Guru*" , according to Herman Nirwana, describes the importance for Minangkabau young people to face life difficulties, to makes them stronger, as a saying goes "*kok baniah nak tumbuah rancak, pindahan ka lungguak buruak*" (If a seed wants to grow excellently,

put it in a bad mud). This saying can be connotated that the quality of Minang young people will be better if they can survive a difficult life. A rantau life that full of difficulties, sadness, and challenges is assumed as "lungguak buruak" (bad mud). If a perantau (migrant) manage to survive these difficulties, they can be called as a successful migrant who manages to "*mambangkik batang tarandam*".

The success of merantau, in addition, to be determined by migrant's ability in reading the natural sign (opportunity and challenges), is also affected by their skill. Minangkabau culture teaches the importance of life skill, as a saying reads "*tabang basitumpu inggok mancangkam*". This saying is advice for Minangkabau migrant to develop their life skills such as technical, communication, teamwork, and other life skills. Lifeskill allows migrant to overcome various problems to achieve success. The value of "*tabang basitumpu inggok mancangkam*" is a depiction of a bird flying and gripping with perfect balance. The migrants need to imitate the bird's technique, begin with strategy, end it with success.

Minangkabau merantau process is begun by cultural suggestion that single men seek for living in other place. It is contained in a Minang poem, "*karakatau madang dihulu, babuah babungo balun, marantau bujang dahulu, dirumah baguno balun*" (Marta S., 2014).

The purpose of merantau is to gain wealth, knowledge, and fame. A migrant who manages to achieve these three points is called a success. Narda (2011) state that the philosophy of "*mambangkik batang tarandam*" is a sacred sentence of minangkabau ethnic in living their live.. *Batang tarandam* can be defined as a poor, slumped life, so that the saying *mambangkik batang tarandam* can be defined as efforts to rise from poverty. The saying "*mambangkik batang tarandam*" represents the spirit to achieve career success, it becomes the main value of Minangkabau merantau.

Young perantau, when deciding to migrate, is in condition of "*batulang salapan*

*karek*". That saying describes the condition of perantau who goes without enough money to survive for a long time in rantau place. It can be said that they bring only a few amounts of money. Accordingly, once they arrive in rantau, they should immediately look for a job to survive. This also means that migrants should be able to maximize his thinking, mental, and skill potential when seeing opportunities that can result in economic advantages. To maximize these three potential can be described one by one to describe the value of Minangkabau merantau.

To maximize the mental potential, both towards himself, or to other people, and to Allah SWT. A good mental attitude is contained in "*dima bumi dipijak disitu langik dijunjuang*". Minangkabau migrants are well known by their blending ability, they can quickly adapt to an environment. This ability is also described in saying, "*dima bumi dipijak disitu langik dijunjuang*" (Latief, 2002).

Studies on educational values in Minangkabau merantau, both through interviews and literature study, found four core values of Minangkabau merantau. First, merantau in the value context of "career success", second: merantau in the value context of "knowledge and experience development", third: merantau in the value context of "mental and social resilience" and fourth "merantau in the value context of "sharpening life-skill".

Success is everyone's goal. Success can be defined as the attainment of a goal, the emergence of happiness, the fulfillment of needs, and other various criteria. Chopra D. (1994) define success as continuous expansion of happiness and the progressive realization of a valuable purpose. ESQ Leadership Center (2018) explains that success refers to universal desire many people want to achieve in life.

The statement above explains some criteria of success such as: The attainment of purpose, happiness, and need fulfillment. Essentially, success is related to human life. The essence of human life is described in various theories like Kant's philosophy

stating that human life is directed to being where human understand their existence. (Titus in Kartadinata, 2014). In many literatures, it is explained that human life to achieve self-existence (Kant in Kartadinata, 2014). Kartadinata (2014) state that education possesses developmental function, namely, assisting individual in developing themselves with all of their uniqueness..

In the same vein, the essence of success in Minangkabau is to be an individual who is “*urang sabana urang*” (Madjo-Indo in Muntasyir dan Munir, 2009). “*urang sabana urang*” means Minangkabau people .who are success in terms of economy, knowledge, and experience, mental health , and benefit to other people. . One of the attempts to be “*urang sabana urang*” by Minagnkabau is to go merantau. This spirit of being a success is contained in “*mambangkik batang tarandam*”. This value contains advise.

- a) It is an advice for Minangkabau perantau to gain success in rantau. It forces Minangkabau perantau to not to go home before gaining success. It is also an advice for the perantau to return to their hometown after they are success. It is contained in a Minang poem, “*karakatau madang dihulu, babuah babungo balun, marantau bujang dahulu, dirumah baguno balun*” (Marta S., 2011).
- b) The value of “*mambangkik batang tarandam*” means efforts to gain success.. To gain success is not an easy business, it requires uneasy efforts. In order to gain success, perantau should never give up easily, this can be seen from the saying “*sekali layar terkembang, pantang surut ke belakang*”. This saying teaches perantau not to give up easily.
- c) Difficulties in gaining success can be overcome if a perantau has advantages namely: 1) Knowledge, 2) mental attitude, and (3) skill. In Minangkabau ethnic, they are known as: (1) *cerdik cendikia*, (2) *arif bijaksana* dan (3) *kurincang bekerja*.

Education is a mean for self-development by employing aspect of knowledge, attitudes and skill. Ki Hajar Dewantara (1977) defines *education* as an attempt to improve character, thought, and physics is in line with the nature and its environment.. Kartadinata (2014) State that education is human attempt to move from the condition of what it is the the condition of what should be”

Every discussion on education cannot be separated from thought, mental, and physical as important aspect to be developed within the students. *These three aspect* are developed from the condition as it is. The definition of education by Ki Hajar Dewantara, (1997) contain narration of,, be in harmony worth nature and society”. It refers to an education that is based on environment and local wisdom. An education that is in harmony with the nature and the society is in line with Kartadinata’s view (2014) who said that a good Indonesian person is a person whose identity is in line with Indonesian culture, and education should establish cultural intelligence.

Merantau is a learning process from nature and life experience. *To learn from nature and life experience* is contained in the saying “*alam takambang jadi guru*”. It is an advice for minangkabau people to always learn not only to formal education but also to the informal ones.. “*Alam takambang jadi guru*” means the value of Minang people character who can always take the lesson from life process, including the merantau process. To learn from merantau process means to learn from three stage of merantau process called as pra-merantau, post-merantau, and pasca-merantau. Minangkabau young people can take life lesson from the learning stage. Pre-merantau means to learn from a condition that is full of difficulty, post-merantau means to learn from learn from the difficulty, post-metantau means to understand individual’s serf description

*Pra merantau* stage describes a life that is full of difficulties, far from happiness. To move from themselves from poverty, in minangkabau culture, it is done by go merantau. Merantau, “*karakatau madang*

*dihulu, babuah babungo balun, marantau bujang dahulu, dirumah baguno balun*" (Marta S., 2014). The last words of the poem are "merantau bujang dahulu, dirumah belum berguna". It describes the potential held by the minang people. The phrase "Merantau bujang dahulu" is a suggestion for the young to go merantau so that they can be more well-developed.

Post-merantau stage is a stage to free from life difficulties, poverty by merantau. Minang culture teach perantau to live merantau life cleverly. A clever individual is called as *cerdik cendikia* in Minang language. This kind of people are characterized by being critical, argumentative, and anticipative. It is described in a saying "*taimpik nak di ateh, takuruang nak di lua*". This saying teach perantau to have many alternatives to get out of problems they are facing. Another saying like "*alun takilek alah takalam*" andn "*tahu di rantiang ka malantiang, tahu di duri kamancucuak, tahu di dahan kamaimpok, tahu di batu ka manaruang*". All of those sayings describe the character of Minang people who can see the explicit and implicit sign, or can understand the natural sign so that always behave critically, carefully and anticipatively (Madjo,1999).

Post merantau is a stage where the individual enjoys their success and utilize the success for the environment, especially for their developing their hometown. Minang migrant is taught not to forget their family when they gain success. One of the elements of merantau, in definition of merantau by Naim (2005:pp.3) is "to return home". It possess denotative and connotative meaning. Its denotative meaning is that the migrant literally return to their hometown although they do not stay. Its connotative meaning is that to bring their success home by helping to develop their hometown, helping their family through guidance and economic aid. Although the migrants do not literally go home, when they send their wealth to build their family house and hometown, they have been considered go home to the hometown. Some sayings

state about the usefulness of success migrant for their hometown as follow: "*satinggi-tinggi tabang bangau inggoknyo ka kubangan juo*" or "*baraia sawah diateh lambok sawah dibawah*". These sayings teach migrants to always remember their hometown and the migrant's success that can be enjoyed by his family.

Human being are born with their own skill and talent. It is normal when an individual provide different response in addressing a stimulus. However, what makes an individual is different from others is their ability to doing self-improvement. Supriatna (2017) state that in the context of Indonesian education, career development is in line with the meaning of education, a conscious and planned attempt to create a learning situation and process so that the students can actively develop their potential in order to reach spiritual strength, self-control, personality, noble character, and skill that are needed by himself, society, and the country.

The context of education as it is explained above view personality as an important element to be developed in the learning education. Personality refers to someone's overall attitude, expression, feeling, temperament, identity, and behavior. Such expression and temperament will be realized in an action when someone face certain situation. Every individual holds propensity of standard behavior, it occurs consistently in facing a situation so that it becomes his identity.

Olson and Hergenhahn (2013), personality is individual's self that is shown to the public, personality allows someone to be socially effective. Allport (in Olson and Hergenhahn, 2013) define personality as a dynamic organization within the individuals self on their psychophysical systems, determining unique adjustment manner toward his environment". Normal personality, according to Allport, contains four characteristic(1) it is done by internal awareness, not external compulsion, (2) dynamics, (3)future-oriented and (4) capable of synthesizing life.

Personality greatly affect social interaction ability. Migration emerge as a mean to train individual's personality in establishing self-belief and behave wisely in social interaction. Minangkabau cultural value teach behavioral norms of merantau, which is stated in saying "*dima bumi dipijak disitu langik dijunjuang*". This saying teach Minang people to adjust themselves with different cultures and become wisely interact.

Wise become a term that can be used to describe the migrant's personality in work and in social interaction. The criteria of wise Minang people is that they are a wise. Minang people are told to have positive attitude toward himself, other people, and environment. This is supported by many minang saying "*Bakato paliharo lidah, bajalan paliharo kaki*". This saying teach the Minang migrant should be careful in speaking. They should prevent their statement or their behavior from resulting in conflict because it will make other minang people difficult to make friends.

Minang people, when migrating, are taught to make many friends, especially with local resident. A suggestion to make friends is described in saying "*jikok anak pai ka lapau, hiu bali belanak bali, ikan padang bali dahulu, jikok anak pai ka rantau, ibu cari dunsanak cari, induak samang cari dahulu*". The last three verses are the content of the poem. It contents suggest the migrants to prioritize looking for a job and establish a good relationship with the business owner. It is not recommended to not to stay in brother's house for a ong time. It is suggested that they look for a job and financially independent. The character of persistence, hardworker, honest, and patience will help migrants to establish a business with other people.

To face the 21st challenge requires a critical, moral, and , skilled human resource. Bernie Trilling and Charles Fadel (2009) state (1) learning and innovation skill, (2) digital literacy skill and (3) career and life skill is required to face 21th century challenge.. It means that life skill can be one of the skill that is required to be able to compete in the 21st century.

Brolin (Amirudin, 2017) explains that life skill is a sequence of knowledge and capability needed to carryout and to solve problems. The term life skill idoes not belong to certain vocational skill, it requires supports of other basic functional such as reading, writing and calculating, and creating formula to solve problems, managing resources, and teamwork using technology.

Merantau can be a mean to learn and train about life skill. In Minangkabau term, those with agile motorirc is called as "*kurincang bekerja*". People who are categorized as "*kurincang bekerja*" are those who can think quickly behave properly Minangkabau merantau about the value of "*Kurincang Bekerja*" is described in the saying goes "*tabang basitumpu inggok mancakam*". This saying means that minang people possess an adequate skill in working. "*Tabang basitumpu*" is likened to a bird that stand on something when beginning to fly, so that this may result in huge force to start learning.. While "*inggok mancangkam*" is likened to a bird strong perch. "*Inggok mancakam*" is a motivation to the migrants to gain success in their migration, and is accepted by the local people there.. In order to gain success, the migrants should possess skills to support life success achievement. Some of the skills are communication, teamwork, and problem solving.

## CONCLUSION

The finding of the study showed that in Minangkabau's Merantau Culture, there are four educational values namely the value of career success, knowledge and experiences, mental and social resilience, and the value of life skill. This can be used as a reference in constructing a local wisdom-based career guidance and counseling at school.

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