

Research Article

Merantau Culture as One of The Stratgeies In Developing Independent Character in The Environment Minangkabau Community

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Abstract: For most Indonesian people, especially the Minangkabau tribe in West Sumatra, merantau has become a way of life. This culture of wandering is very significant and important in the archipelago. So the Minangkabau people use this culture of wandering as a strategy in cultivating an independent nature. This research aims to see and find out how the culture of wandering is a strategy in developing independent character in the Minangkabau community. The method used for this study is a literature study sourced from books, journals, papers, notes or articles to collect information about the culture of merantau Minangkabau society, independent character and the culture of merantau towards the development of independent character in the Minangkabau community. The research results show that merantau symbolizes Minangkabau cross-cultural culture, where they initially come into contact with different systems and ways of life. They have to learn to adapt if they want to adapt, be accepted even though there are differences and the Minangkabau people cultivate an independent character as one way of doing this.

Keywords: Merantau culture, Independent character, Minangkabau society

INTRODUCTION

Minangkabau is an area that has a variety of cultures. It can be observed that one of the largest and most special tribes in Indonesia is the Minangkabau (West Sumatra), with its various customs (Darmayanti et al., 2017). One of the cultural characteristics of the Minangkabau is merantau (Malik, 2016; Oktaviani et al., 2022; Rohisfi, 2022; Wiji et al.,

2020). Merantau has become a habit of the Minangkabau people which is carried out continuously. Merantau refers to sailing, searching, living abroad, or traveling to another country in search of work, knowledge (science) and so on. In the Minangkabau realm, merantau culture refers to exchanges between the Minangkabau people and the outside environment. Merantau functions as a location for life education (Marta, 2014). Where a person's maturity in facing the sweetness and bitterness of life can be assessed through going abroad (Saifullah & Yulika, 2017). A person's dignity can be enhanced by migrating while in a traditional setting.

The habit of migrating among the Minangkabau people originates from a Minang people's saying which reads: "*Karatau madang di hulu, Babuah babungo balun, Marantau Bujang dahulu, Di rumah baguno balun*" (Karatau madang upstream, Flowering fruit not yet, Merantau Bujang first, At home useful not yet). This pantun suggests that the younger generation of Minangkabau should leave their hometown because they are deemed unable to contribute much there (Fithri, 2014). The purpose of migration is to broaden one's horizons by moving to a new location, not to expel people from their home country. By comparing the values that apply outside of one's customs, a temporary departure is believed to strengthen understanding of Minangkabau values and customs, giving rise to a deeper admiration and love for one's own customs and culture (Marta, 2014).

As progress and time goes by, wandering is now also done by gadih children (the Minangkabau term for girls) as well as bujang children (the Minangkabau term for boys). However, according to Minangkabau custom, gadih (female) children have a strong role as "*umbun puruik pegangan kunci*" which requires them to take care of the household and remain at home (Ekaputra & Hanandini, 2014) and are not required to migrate. A child will inherit his mother's tribe because the Minangkabau community's concept of kinship is matrilineal descent which regulates kinship relationships through the mother's line. "*Limpapeh rumah nan gadang, Acang-acang dalam nagari, Muluik manih kucindan murab, Rang kampung sayang kasadonyo*" is how the Minangkabau proverb describes women.

Considering that Minangkabau women decorate their rumah gadang, it is natural that the rumah gadang should be the center of their existence. This proverb illustrates that in the interests of the tribe, the main role of women is to continue the family (tribe) lineage. In a tribal context, the role of Minangkabau women can be likened to "*queen bees*", with the main responsibility for producing honey and offspring lying in their hands, while men play the role of soldiers and workers (Erianjoni, 2011).

Naturally, the Minangkabau people adhere to the tradition of migrating which involves careful planning and considering all factors. When they arrived at their new home, they always adhered to the adage "*Dima bumi dipijak di situ langik di jujuang*" which states that immigrants must be able to adapt to life and society in the new location in order to successfully adjust to leaving their place of residence. So that by migrating they can grow their potential and abilities and improve themselves (Aprial, 2020). The Minangkabau tribe is known for having good culture, adapting quickly to new environments and tribes, and having excellent communication skills. However, language barriers, differences in character, attitudes, values, and new practices that do not exist in their hometowns are just some of the difficulties that migrants must learn to adapt over time (Hutabarat & Nurchayati, 2021).

Someone who chooses to migrate to try to leave their "safety zone" and try to live in an environment different from their own country must be prepared to face all the dangers that exist and make all their own preparations, by carefully considering the situation, which

is clearly very different from living in their hometown. . When parents continue to accompany and handle everything while still living in their hometown. Of course, someone will become dependent on their parents and cannot be independent if they continue like this. When you migrate, the independent character of the person who migrates can be seen. So the aim of this research was to see and find out how the culture of wandering is a strategy in developing independent character in the Minangkabau community.

METHOD

This article uses the literature study method. Literature studies are connected with theoretical research and additional sources regarding norms, values and culture that emerge in the social context studied (Sugiyono, 2007). According to Syaibani, literature study refers to all efforts made by researchers to collect information that will be or is being researched (Syapitri et al., 2023). One method of collecting data is documentation, which can be in the form of books, journals, papers, notes, or articles (Arikunto, 2010). Based on this, the sequence of tasks in this research includes collecting information from the library which researchers now relate to, namely 1) collecting information about the culture of wandering the Minangkabau community, independent character and the culture of wandering towards the development of independent character in the Minangkabau community; 2) reading and taking notes; 3) processing relevant materials; and 4) complete the problem formulation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Minangkabau People's Merantau Culture

When related to Merantau, West Sumatra is known for its Merantau tradition (Firdaus, 2020; Hanifah et al., 2017). The Merantau tradition is one of the traditions that is still prevalent in society and is its characteristic. The fact that the Minang tribe is blessed with skilled nomadic skills is one of the instantly recognizable aspects of their ethnicity. Advice to travel to leave one's homeland, try one's luck (Naim, 2013), then return home with goods valued in Minangkabau itself. The successful implementation of the culture of wandering can be translated into customs, norms and cultural values that are upheld, respected and fostered for generations (Amir, 2011). It can be seen that the Minangkabau tribe interprets the culture of wandering as a way of interacting with the outside world. Every bachelor (the term for a boy in Minangkabau society) in traditional Minangkabau society almost always travels as a migrant to someone else's country, because by proving his success abroad, it is likely that the bachelor will be more successful in various matters relating to customs such as marriage, honor, position in the tribe, and so on (Kato, 2005).

The number of population migration in Indonesia is collected by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) and reported in the Indonesian Migration Statistics report, Long Form Results of the 2020 Population Census. According to BPS, the number of migrants leaving a province is determined by dividing the population. A total of 980,911 people left West Sumatra as migrants between 2020 and 2022 (Santika, 2023). Even though the population only ranks seventh in terms of numbers, 15.77% of the entire population of West Sumatra is said to have immigrated, which ranks third in terms of population migration so far, after DI Yogyakarta (20.17%) and DKI Jakarta (29.39%) (Putra, 2023). Based on the large number of people from West Sumatra who migrate, it is motivated by several factors, namely the matrilineal system (maternal lineage), cultural factors, educational factors and financial problems.

First, the matrilineal system (maternal lineage): men have few privileges in the Minangkabau matrilineal system, and only women are given inheritance rights. This is the reason why Minang men try to migrate, so they are always looking for work, education and other resources to support their lives (Saija et al., 2021). Rumah gadang in his hometown accepts women as permanent residents, which is usually called "*limpapeh rumah gadang*". As a result, many women who occupy managerial positions have sako titles, inheritance from their parents, or even family inheritance. This is because the Minangkabau tribe, one of the tribes that still lives today, has a matrilineal kinship structure (maternal line), where the maternal lineage is considered a kinship concept (Maharani & Hudo, 2022).

Second, the Minang people's tendency to migrate is influenced by cultural considerations because they have been preserving their culture for so long (Atan, 2019). "*Karatau madang di hulu, Babuah babungo balun, Marantau Bujang dahulu, Di rumah baguno balun*" (Karatau madang upstream, Flowering fruit not yet, Merantau Bujang first, At home useful not yet) that's the Minang proverb. This proverb highlights how customary law does not give roles or status to boys who are single or unmarried. A young person cannot take decisions for the family. This is due to the belief that children lack experience. As a result, these young people need to migrate from their hometowns to gain experience.

Third, getting a good education is one of the reasons Minang people migrate (Oktaviani et al., 2022). In Minangkabau society, education is highly valued, especially Islamic religious education. The law "*adat basandi sara', sara' basandi kita-bullah*" emphasizes the need for Minang people to have knowledge about Islam. Apart from maximizing human potential which differentiates humans from other species, education also aims to realize the whole human being in harmony with the basic principles of creation (Marisyah et al., 2019). However, those who want to study have to leave the Minang area because of the low quality of education there. Therefore, the current young generation of Minangkabau are those who migrate with the aim of learning or obtaining information and they decide to do so by moving from their place of birth (Marta, 2014). "*Alam takambang menjadi guru*" is the guideline behind the enthusiasm of the Minangkabau people in sharing information. Humans can be formed through education (Afdal et al., 2022) in the process of trying to develop intrinsic psychological and physical skills that are in harmony with societal norms, values and culture (Zuhdi et al., 2021). Human life is also influenced by education which allows them to interact with their physical and socio-cultural environment (Fatmawati & Sano, 2019). A person also needs education because it has the power to change the course of a person's life (Rahmiati et al., 2021). Education that liberates or functions to humanize humans (Ratnasari & Neviyarni, 2021; Sumanti et al., 2022). Based on this mindset, the Minangkabau people should be able to take and absorb wisdom from things they encounter in everyday life. The fact is that the Minangkabau people have an education system at Surau which is essentially a source of enthusiasm for them to learn, they practice silat and recite the Koran there.

Fourth, financial difficulties are one of the reasons why Minang people go abroad (Mustafid & Prasetyo, 2019)). Because they see that the potential and job opportunities in other areas are greater than their current hometown. This problem encourages Minangkabau people to move to big cities to work in various fields such as trade or entrepreneurship and improve their family's standard of living (Akmal in Asmon & Adri, 2021; Przepioraka, 2017). The strong trading culture of the Minangkabau people then gave rise to another custom known as "*maota di lapau*" (discussion/deliberation nagari) (Erni et al., 2013). Apart from that, there are values that encourage Minangkabau migrants, especially men, to leave their home country due to economic factors. This value comes from Minangkabau

custom which prohibits men from having large inheritances. On the other hand, they have obligations to their family and their nephew's children. Due to the situation, men in Minang Kabau have to carry out this task by looking for work overseas.

Independent Character

Independent character consists of two syllables, namely character and independent. Character is an individual's way of thinking and acting that determines himself in life and his ability to work together with other people in the family, society and country. People with integrity are certainly able to make decisions and take responsibility for them (Suradi, 2017). Character is also formed by the behavior a person carries out; As a result, a person's character develops without realizing it. Meanwhile, the capacity to freely manage ideas, feelings and behavior and make the necessary efforts to overcome emotions of guilt and uncertainty is known as independence (Desmita, 2014). Independent individuals will act and behave independently, not depending on other people to fulfill all their life obligations (Sobri & Moerdiyanto, 2014). So, it can be concluded that being able to meet your own needs without the help of others is a sign of independent character (Samawi & Hariyanto, 2012). The fundamental quality that differentiates someone from other people is their character (Heri in Astamal et al., 2021; Elfina et al., 2021). Independent character is something that is used to direct, manage and identify unfavorable attitudes that depend on other individuals in making decisions (Hudiyono, 2014). His actions show this character, namely living freely in carrying out personal duties, accustomed to self-control and organization, and ready to assume responsibility that will bring success in the future.

Migrant Culture on the Development of Independent Character in the Minangkabau Community Environment

Culture is a set of fundamental beliefs that a group learns and develops as they work through internal and external integration issues. These beliefs are considered valuable and are then passed on to new members as a way of seeing, thinking and feeling. appropriate in relation to this problem (Aslan et al., 2019; Nugraha et al., 2020). Culture is not something created by an individual's own imagination, but rather a positive legacy from the past (Zuriatina, 2020). The existence of culture in a society determines everything that exists in that society (Herskovits & Malinowsk in Karolina & Randy, 2021). The first thing that needs to be understood is the importance of understanding local wisdom, namely the good deeds that people do in their daily lives (Jehamat & Mbadhi ini Arifin, 2020). Good assessment is not limited to one form, it can also take the form of healthy customs and architecture. Humans as a system acquire culture through a continuous learning process that begins at birth and ends on the day of death, not just assigning it (Syukurman et al., 2020).

The Minang people have a tradition or culture of wandering which makes them wiser in thinking and behaving. For the Minang people, being a migrant is a matter of pride and self-esteem (Erni et al., 2013). The Minangkabau people are essentially a group of ordinary explorers who have to travel to gain life experience. Therefore, it is not unexpected that the Minangkabau population is spread throughout Indonesia, even abroad (Aprial, 2020). The Minangkabau tribe is a prosperous and accomplished group. When Minang people migrated abroad, they were very successful and even settled abroad (Angelia & Hasan, 2017). Thus, migrating is a cross-cultural Minangkabau civilization, that is where they first encountered different systems, ways of life, and had to learn to adapt in order to be accepted and integrated into diversity (Febriani et al., 2021). Thus, in responding to these problems, a person's personality character is actually being formed at

this time (Aprial, 2020). Naturally, a person can learn a lot about life from the various experiences he experiences.

The belief held for a long time that "*alam takambang menjadi guru*" is the basis for the history of the Minangkabau people's migration. This philosophy invites the Minangkabau people to draw lessons from the experiences and situations they encounter in everyday life. The Minang Kabau people have been known as an adventurous community since ancient times. Even the idea that young men (bujang children) should not try to earn a living outside their hometown is an incorrect idea. This is expressed in the proverb: "*Karatau madang di hulu, Babuah babungo balun, Marantau Bujang dahulu, Di rumah baguno balun*" (Karatau Madang upstream, Flowering fruit not yet, Merantau Bujang first, At home useful yet). Even as children, men were forbidden to sleep at home and instead had to sleep in the surau where they practiced silat and recited the Koran. The cultural belief is that "*kalau laki-laki dewasa nanti harus Merantau*" where the natural beauty and fertility of Minangkabau does not make them lazy (Abubakar, 2014). In this way, the culture of "*alam takambang menjadi guru*" becomes a lifelong mentor for them, showing how adaptation to the environment occurs because going abroad is a habit to learn new things.

Apart from that, the following traditional words describe the two roles of Minang men in Minangkabau culture. "*Kaluak paku kacang belimbing, Bauhnyo lenggang-lenggangkan, Dibao urang kasaruasi, Anak dipangku kamanakan dibimbinga, Urang kampuan dipetenggangkan*". The traditional term above symbolizes kaluak Paki, which means the dual role of Minang men in raising the next generation: fathers who raise their children, and mamak who raise their nephews. In order for his nephew and children to grow up to be responsible and helpful members of the Nagari family, he must guide and educate them.

According to the experience of the migrants (Antoni, 2012), they were able to survive in the rantau by positioning themselves strategically and in accordance with the principle of their Minangkabau ancestors, "*Pai karantau mencari induak samang*". This means that we have to look for a foster father or mother before we travel overseas. This Minang philosophy can be seen in the following saying: "*Kok anak pai ka pakan, ikan bali, balanak bali, ikan pajang bali dahulu, kok anak pai bajalan, kawan cari, dunsanak cari, induak samang cari dahulu*". At least, this is a component of diplomacy and shows the toughness of Minang nomads. There is no doubt that there is a path to success even if they only rely on the "*tulang delapan potong*" (relying only on what the body is). Especially if they are committed to trying to change their fate and always follow the Minang philosophy, even though they don't have capital from their village, they use their ingenuity when they are overseas. Based on this, the Minangkabau tribe is famous for its great communication skills, good culture, and ability to easily adapt to new situations and tribes. This can also be observed when Minang people go abroad, initially they go without capital and work with their Samang parents, with the perseverance and tenacity of the nomads they can set up their own business without the Samang parents.

The process of dialectics, conflict and balance in Minangkabau society has given birth to Minangkabau society which has a different personality, way of life and outlook on life. Among these independent characters are: 1) focus on moral principles and the power of reason to realize life; 2) a work ethic motivated by a focus on each individual's fundamental mental capacity to complete tasks that benefit everyone; 3) independence, namely the ability of the Minang people to live freely and independently of other people, which is the result of a strong work ethic in establishing the caliphate; 4) kindness and tolerance are

fostered by equality even in the face of competition, especially when considering community; 5) unity, namely a shared view in society, encouraging the development of social awareness necessary for peaceful coexistence; 6) Imaginative is a forward-thinking perspective produced by strong morals, a strong work ethic, independence, and a high level of tolerance and a sense of togetherness. Therefore, Merantau can be said to represent the cross-cultural Minangkabau civilization, where they first encountered different ways of life and systems. In order to adapt and be accepted despite differences, they need to learn how to adapt. And one of the ways that the Minangkabau people do is to develop an independent character.

CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that going abroad is a way of communicating in the outside world and interacting with new people. The cross-cultural culture of the Minangkabau, where they first experienced other systems and ways of life, can be considered represented by Merantau. They need to learn how to adapt to be accepted despite differences. And forming an independent personality is one of the ways the Minangkabau people do it.

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