

## Educational Perspectives on the #KaburAjaDulu Phenomenon and Youth Social Behavior in Indonesia

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### Abstract

*This research investigates the viral #KaburAjaDulu phenomenon in Indonesia as a critical response to socio-economic crises in 2025. Employing digital ethnography and systematic literature review, the study analyzes how legislative shocks, specifically Inpres No. 1/2025, and economic instability drive youth toward migration. Applying Stag Hunt game theory and Bourdieu's cultural capital, it identifies a "defection equilibrium" where skilled individuals prioritize individual survival over national development due to institutional mistrust. Findings indicate that digital escapism and behaviors such as doom spending serve as precursors to physical migration intentions. The study contends that the current educational framework inadvertently facilitates brain drain by providing portable skills without domestic infrastructure. It proposes a systemic shift toward culturally mediated Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and labor reforms to restore public trust. Ultimately, #KaburAjaDulu serves as a diagnostic indicator for policymakers, highlighting the urgent necessity to transform "escape" into a viable choice through structural and pedagogical strategic enhancements.*

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini menyelidiki fenomena viral #KaburAjaDulu di Indonesia sebagai respons kritis terhadap krisis sosio-ekonomi pada tahun 2025. Menggunakan etnografi digital dan tinjauan literatur sistematis, studi ini menganalisis bagaimana guncangan legislatif, khususnya Inpres No. 1/2025, serta ketidakstabilan ekonomi mendorong pemuda menuju migrasi. Menerapkan teori permainan Stag Hunt dan modal budaya Bourdieu, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi "ekuilibrium pembelotan" di mana individu terampil memprioritaskan kelangsungan hidup pribadi dibandingkan pembangunan nasional akibat ketidakpercayaan institusional. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa pelarian digital dan perilaku seperti doom spending berfungsi sebagai prekursor niat migrasi fisik. Studi ini menegaskan bahwa kerangka pendidikan saat ini secara tidak sengaja memfasilitasi fenomena brain drain dengan menyediakan keterampilan portabel tanpa infrastruktur domestik. Peneliti mengusulkan pergeseran sistemik menuju Pembelajaran Sosial-Emosional (PSE) yang dimediasi budaya dan reformasi ketenagakerjaan untuk memulihkan kepercayaan publik. Akhirnya, #KaburAjaDulu berfungsi sebagai indikator diagnostik bagi pembuat kebijakan, menyoroti urgensi untuk mengubah "pelarian" menjadi pilihan layak melalui peningkatan struktural serta pedagogis secara menyeluruh berkelanjutan.



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## **A. INTRODUCTION**

### **1. Background**

The contemporary Indonesian socio-political landscape is currently witnessing a transformative shift in the collective consciousness of its younger generation, a transition that has found its most potent expression through the digital sphere. The emergence of the viral hashtag #KaburAjaDulu (loosely translated as "Just Leave First" or "Just Run Away First") in early 2025 serves as a significant marker of a deepening crisis in the social contract between the state and its burgeoning youth population.<sup>1</sup> While social media trends are often dismissed as fleeting, the #KaburAjaDulu phenomenon is uniquely rooted in a complex convergence of economic volatility, legislative shocks, and a pervasive sense of ontological insecurity among Generation Z and Millennial cohorts. The hashtag surged into national prominence in February 2025, acting as a digital repository for the frustrations of millions of young Indonesians who feel that the path toward the "Golden Indonesia 2045" vision has been obscured by systemic barriers and policy neglect.<sup>1</sup>

The genesis of this movement can be traced back to the "tech winter" of late 2023, where a collapse in startup funding and mass layoffs in the technology sector first prompted "tech bros" and young professionals to question their futures within the domestic economy.<sup>3</sup> However, the escalation into a broader cultural resistance movement in 2025 was catalyzed by specific government actions, most notably the implementation of Instruksi Presiden Nomor 1 Tahun 2025, which introduced aggressive budget cuts across education and public services.<sup>2</sup> These austerity measures, coupled with a national youth unemployment rate of 16.1% for those aged 15 to 24, have created a "push" environment where leaving the country is no longer seen merely as an ambition for self-improvement, but as a rational survival strategy.<sup>3</sup> Experts from Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) have emphasized that this trend reflects a critical and increasingly sophisticated view of Indonesia's structural flaws, ranging from stagnant wages to the lack of intellectual property recognition for young innovators.

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<sup>1</sup> UMS, "The Brain Drain Effect of #KaburAjaDulu," <https://www.ums.ac.id/en/news/global-pulse/the-brain-drain-effect-of>.

<sup>2</sup> WikiPEdia, "KaburAjaDulu," in *Wikipedia bahasa Indonesia, ensiklopedia bebas*, December 28, 2025, <https://id.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=KaburAjaDulu&oldid=28749040>.

<sup>3</sup> Kurniawan Arif Maspul, "#KaburAjaDulu — Escaping Reality or Redefining Success?," *Medium*, February 18, 2025, <https://dikurniawanarif.medium.com/kaburajadulu-escaping-reality-or-redefining-success-6e4a66111384>.

From an educational perspective, the #KaburAjaDulu phenomenon poses fundamental questions about the efficacy of Indonesia's current human capital development strategy. The nation is currently grappling with a "brain drain" crisis that is qualitatively different from previous waves of migration. Modern migrants are often the most productive and highly educated members of society, possessing "portable" cultural capital language skills, technical certifications, and global orientations that allow them to integrate seamlessly into more appreciative markets like Singapore, Australia, or the European Union. This exodus is not merely a loss of labor but a loss of the nation's future teachers, innovators, and leaders. As qualified educators leave for better compensation and working conditions abroad, the domestic education system faces a secondary crisis: the inability to produce a competent next generation, thereby creating a feedback loop of decline.

Recent Scopus-indexed research on Indonesian youth social behavior has predominantly focused on the psychological impacts of the digital era, particularly the rise of behaviors such as Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), "doom spending," and digital escapism within the Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity (VUCA) framework.<sup>4</sup> Studies have highlighted how uncertainty and complexity exacerbate impulsive consumptive behaviors among university students as a coping mechanism for social and financial pressures.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the prevalence of gaming disorder and social media addiction has been documented as a form of "escape" for adolescents struggling with emotional regulation and academic stress.<sup>5</sup> While these studies provide an essential psychological foundation, there is a distinct gap in the literature regarding the intersection of these digital behaviors with physical migration intentions prompted by specific socio-political crises like #KaburAjaDulu.

This report seeks to fill this gap by synthesizing contemporary digital ethnography with institutional economic theories, such as the "Stag Hunt" game theory, to explain the current defection of Indonesian youth from the national project.<sup>6</sup> Unlike existing literature that treats migration and social behavior as separate domains, this analysis argues that #KaburAjaDulu is a unified response to a perceived failure of the domestic

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<sup>4</sup> Iseu Anggraeni Sari Sri Handani and Dena Mustika Syifa Vidya Sofwan, "The Role of the Vuca Method in Understanding the Phenomenon of Fomo and Doom Spending among the Younger Generation," *Nasir Al-Kutub Indonesia* 2(2) (2024): 39–43, <https://doi.org/10.59965/pij.v2i2.142>.

<sup>5</sup> Budi Satria et al., "Gaming Disorder among Adolescent in Indonesia: A Multi-Settings Cross-Sectional Study," *Acta Biomedica Atenei Parmensis* 95, no. 5 (October 2024): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.23750/abm.v95i5.15826>.

educational and labor market ecosystems to provide environmental mastery and psychological well-being. The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on the 2025 socio-political triggers and the proposal of a culturally mediated Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) framework as a strategic mitigative tool to restore public trust. By examining the "portability" of cultural capital and the strategic equilibrium of trust, this study reveals that the Indonesian youth are not abandoning their national identity, but are instead redefined their loyalty through a lens of self-preservation and global agency.

The findings of this research indicate that the #KaburAjaDulu trend is a diagnostic indicator of a "defection equilibrium" caused by a lack of institutional commitment and the presence of structural obstacles such as nepotism and underfunding.<sup>6</sup> The analysis concludes that the Indonesian education system inadvertently facilitates brain drain by providing graduates with the skills to leave without providing the domestic infrastructure to keep them. Consequently, a systemic pivot toward grief-sensitive pedagogy and institutionalized SEL is required to build the resilience necessary for youth to navigate domestic challenges while the state undergoes the fundamental labor reforms needed to retain its most valuable assets.<sup>7</sup>

## **2. Problem Formulation**

The surge of the #KaburAjaDulu phenomenon necessitates a rigorous academic inquiry into its root causes and long-term implications for Indonesia's social and educational structure. To address this, the report is guided by the following research questions:

- a. What are the specific socio-economic and legislative catalysts in early 2025 that transformed the #KaburAjaDulu hashtag from a niche tech-sector meme into a national movement of youth escapism?
- b. How do digital social behaviors including FOMO, doom spending, and digital escapism serve as precursors to physical migration intentions, and what role does "cultural capital" play in facilitating this transition?
- c. In what ways can the Indonesian educational framework, specifically through

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<sup>6</sup> Tanawat Teepapal, *Uncovering Intent: Reassessing The Role Of Motive In The Punishment Of Premeditated Murder In Indonesia*, 3 (2025): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.56107/penalaw.v3i1.223>.

<sup>7</sup> Hendri Nasution et al., "The Effects Of A Social-Emotional Learning (Sel) Curriculum On Academic Resilience And Prosocial Behavior In High-Poverty Primary Schools At Sdn No.100907 Muara Ampolu I Kecamatan Muara Batangtoru," *Multidisciplinary Indonesian Center Journal (MICJO)* 2 (December 2025): 5652–59, <https://doi.org/10.62567/micjo.v2i4.1535>.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and academic resilience theory, be reformed to address the psychological underpinnings of this crisis and mitigate the accelerating brain drain?

### 3. Research Methodology

This research adopts a multidimensional qualitative-descriptive methodology, integrating digital ethnography, systematic literature review (SLR), and thematic content analysis to explore the #KaburAjaDulu phenomenon. The study recognizes the internet as a rich site of cultural practice and social interaction, necessitating methods that capture the fluidity of digital discourse.

#### a. Digital Ethnography and Netnography

The primary data for analyzing the viral mechanics of the #KaburAjaDulu movement was gathered through digital ethnography, specifically the "scroll-back" method on platforms such as X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, and Instagram. This approach allowed for the observation of "real-time" interactions, the evolution of the hashtag's meaning, and the narrative construction of "escape" as a form of self-preservation. Netnography was utilized to interpret the complex meanings of Indonesian social media statistical data, compiled from reputable institutions such as We Are Social and The Global Statistics.<sup>8</sup> The study also analyzed news reports from major Indonesian outlets (Antara, CNBC Indonesia, UGM News) to establish the timeline of socio-political triggers.<sup>9</sup>

#### b. Systematic Literature Review (SLR)

To provide an academic foundation, a systematic review of Scopus-indexed literature from 2021 to 2025 was conducted. The review focused on themes of "brain drain," "youth social behavior in Indonesia," "academic resilience," and "Social-Emotional Learning". This theoretical triangulation integrated the "Stag Hunt" game theory to model institutional mistrust and Bourdieu's Theory of Cultural Capital to analyze the portability of skills among Indonesian graduates.

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<sup>8</sup> Rosmawaty Hilderiah Pandjaitan, "The Social Media Marketing Mix Trends in Indonesia for 2024: Communication Perspective," *Jurnal Komunikasi Ikatan Sarjana Komunikasi Indonesia* 9, no. 1 (June 2024): 251–69, <https://doi.org/10.25008/jkiski.v9i1.1005>.

<sup>9</sup> Salma, "UGM Expert: Viral Hashtag #KaburAjaDulu Reflects Youth's Critical View of Indonesia's Situation," *Universitas Gadjah Mada*, February 21, 2025, <https://ugm.ac.id/en/news/ugm-expert-viral-hashtag-kaburajadulu-reflects-youths-critical-view-of-indonesias-situation/>.

### **c. Data Analysis and Synthesis**

The synthesis of data involved categorizing findings based on the VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity) framework to understand the psychological drivers of youth behavior.<sup>10</sup> Qualitative insights were woven into a continuous narrative, while quantitative indicators such as youth unemployment rates, LPDP defection statistics, and citizenship transfer data were presented through Markdown tables for clarity and comparison.<sup>11</sup> This methodological integration ensures that the report reflects both the immediate viral sentiment and the deeper structural realities of the Indonesian youth experience in 2025.

## **B. DISCUSSION**

### **1. The Socio-Political Genesis of #KaburAjaDulu: A Diagnostic of Discontent**

The resurgence of the #KaburAjaDulu movement in 2025 is not a spontaneous outburst but the manifestation of a long-simmering disillusionment with the Indonesian developmental model. To understand why "escaping" has become a collective ambition, one must analyze the specific socio-economic triggers that have characterized the transition from 2023 to 2025.

#### **a. The 2023 Tech Winter as a Foundation**

The movement's origins are inextricably linked to the technology sector's "winter" in 2023. During this period, the collapse of numerous domestic startups led to a massive displacement of highly skilled labor. For the first time, the "middle-class dream" of working in the innovative digital economy was shattered, revealing the fragility of the private sector in Indonesia.<sup>12</sup> This initial shock established the hashtag #KaburAjaDulu among technology professionals as a satirical yet desperate response to the lack of job security and the perceived failure of the government to protect the "digital economy" it had so vocally promoted.

#### **b. The 2025 Legislative Catalyst: Inpres No. 1/2025**

The tipping point into a mainstream movement occurred in early 2025 with the issuance of Instruksi Presiden Nomor 1 Tahun 2025. This policy, aimed at fiscal efficiency,

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<sup>10</sup> Sari Sri Handani and Syifa Vidya Sofwan, "The Role of the Vuca Method in Understanding the Phenomenon of Fomo and Doom Spending among the Younger Generation."

<sup>11</sup> Teepapal, *Uncovering Intent: Reassessing The Role Of Motive In The Punishment Of Premeditated Murder In Indonesia*.

<sup>12</sup> Salsabila Damayanti et al., "Vulnerable and Neglected: Middle Class Exclusion in Indonesia's Socio-Economic Policy Dynamics," *Masyarakat, Kebudayaan Dan Politik* 38, no. 3 (October 2025): 231-46, <https://doi.org/10.20473/mkp.V38I32025.231-246>.

resulted in significant budget cuts for higher education and social safety nets. For many young Indonesians, this was interpreted as a retreat of the state from its core responsibility to foster human capital.<sup>13</sup> When coupled with the increasing prevalence of precarious contract-based work and the expansion of the gig economy, the youth began to view their domestic prospects as a "dead end".<sup>14</sup>

Socio-Economic Catalyst	Impact on Youth Sentiment	Relevant Data Point
Tech Winter (2023)	Initial disillusionment among skilled professionals	Startup collapse and mass layoffs
Inpres No. 1/2025	Perceived state abandonment of education funding	Significant budget cuts in education
Stagnant Entry-Level Wages	Financial instability in urban centers	Costs of living vs. minimum wage gap <sup>15</sup>
2025 National Layoffs (PHK)	Fear of long-term unemployment	Rising rates of PHK across sectors <sup>16</sup>
Lack of IP Recognition	Feeling undervalued as innovators	Support for innovation remains localized

### c. The Crisis of "Golden Indonesia 2045"

The government's rhetoric regarding "Golden Indonesia 2045" a vision of Indonesia as a top global economy by its centennial has increasingly clashed with the lived reality of its youth. By 2025, there was a growing perception that there was "no clear roadmap" to reach this goal. Instead of being the "beneficiaries" of a demographic bonus, young Indonesians feel like the "victims" of a demographic burden.<sup>17</sup> This sentiment is amplified by social media accounts like @hrdbacot, which highlight the daily struggles of navigating a labor market characterized by nepotism, toxic management, and unpaid overtime.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>13</sup> UMS, "The Brain Drain Effect of #KaburAjaDulu."

<sup>14</sup> Editor Desk, "Gen Z in Indonesia and the Global 'Escape Culture': Why Many Are Saying #KaburAjaDulu," *Saibumi | Uncovering Asia, One Story at a Time*, October 20, 2025, <https://saibumi.com/en/gen-z-in-indonesia-and-the-global-escape-culture-why-many-are-saying-kaburajadulu/>.

<sup>15</sup> Desk.

<sup>16</sup> WikiPEdia, "KaburAjaDulu."

<sup>17</sup> Liew Zhi Xin, "Why Young Indonesians Want to 'Run Away' from the Country, and the Cost of a Brain Drain - CNA," <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/cna-insider/indonesian-youth-unemployment-brain-drain-kaburajadulu-run-away-cost-5371406>.

<sup>18</sup> UMS, "The Brain Drain Effect of #KaburAjaDulu."

## **2. Theoretical Frameworks: The Stag Hunt and Cultural Capital**

To move beyond a superficial understanding of social media trends, we must apply rigorous theoretical models to explain the behavior of the Indonesian youth. The choice to leave the country is a strategic one, shaped by institutional trust and the resources available to the individual.

### **a. The Stag Hunt: Modeling Institutional Defection**

The "Stag Hunt" game theory provides a sophisticated lens through which to view the #KaburAjaDulu phenomenon. In this model, players must choose between a "Stag" (a high-reward but risky collaborative effort) and a "Hare" (a lower-reward but safer individual effort).

In the Indonesian context:

- 1) The Stag** represents the collective effort to stay, innovate, and build the national economy (e.g., contributing to Golden Indonesia 2045). Success requires high mutual trust and government commitment.
- 2) The Hare** represents the individual choice to migrate (e.g., #KaburAjaDulu). It provides a more immediate and guaranteed reward for the individual (higher salary, better quality of life in Singapore or Spain) but does not contribute to the national project.

By 2025, the relationship between the Indonesian government and its skilled scholars was characterized by a "defection equilibrium". Because individuals demonstrate low trust in governmental commitments due to underfunding, facility shortages, and a history of failed policies they choose the "Hare". This is a rational response to a situation where the "Stag" is perceived as unreachable due to a lack of state commitment.<sup>19</sup>

### **b. Bourdieu's Cultural Capital and the "Portability" of Talent**

The migration patterns observed in the #KaburAjaDulu movement are also explained by the acquisition of "cultural capital".<sup>6</sup> Bourdieu's theory suggests that education provides individuals with "embodied capital" (skills, knowledge, language) and "institutionalized capital" (degrees).

However, the Indonesian education system has created a paradox: it produces high-quality human capital through institutions like LPDP, but the domestic economy lacks the

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<sup>19</sup> Teepapal, *Uncovering Intent: Reassessing The Role Of Motive In The Punishment Of Premeditated Murder In Indonesia*.

"institutional capacity" to absorb this capital.<sup>20</sup> This makes the cultural capital acquired by Indonesian youth "portable".<sup>21</sup> When a graduate finds that their technical skills or academic degree is undervalued or unsupported at home, they leverage these same assets to "escape" to global markets. This results in a "brain gain" for destination countries like Singapore and Australia, who essentially "harvest" the talent that Indonesia has funded but failed to retain.

### 3. Youth Social Behavior: Digital Escapism as a Precursor to Migration

The transition from digital hashtag to physical migration is mediated by specific social behaviors that have become prevalent among Indonesian youth in the early 2020s. These behaviors serve as psychological "training grounds" for the eventual decision to leave.

#### a. The VUCA Framework and Coping Mechanisms

The lives of modern Indonesian youth are characterized by Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity (VUCA). Research indicates that uncertainty and complexity exacerbate behaviors such as Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and "doom spending".

VUCA Element	Behavioral Manifestation	Context in Indonesia 2025
Volatility	Emotional Instability	Sudden policy shifts (Inpres 1/2025) create anxiety
Uncertainty	FOMO / Doom Spending	Impulsive consumption as a way to "live for today" <sup>22</sup>
Complexity	Decision Paralysis	Navigating toxic work cultures vs. unstable startups
Ambiguity	Digital Escapism	Retreating into virtual worlds or social media memes <sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Alejandro Vega-Muñoz, Paloma González-Gómez-del-Miño, and Juan Felipe Espinosa-Cristia, "Recognizing New Trends in Brain Drain Studies in the Framework of Global Sustainability," *Sustainability* 13, no. 6 (January 2021): 3195, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13063195>.

<sup>21</sup> Teepapal, *Uncovering Intent: Reassessing The Role Of Motive In The Punishment Of Premeditated Murder In Indonesia*.

<sup>22</sup> Sari Sri Handani and Syifa Vidya Sofwan, "The Role of the Vuca Method in Understanding the Phenomenon of Fomo and Doom Spending among the Younger Generation."

<sup>23</sup> Satria et al., "Gaming Disorder among Adolescent in Indonesia."

For many, social media consumption is not just entertainment but a "meaning-making practice".<sup>24</sup> "Doom spending" among university students, for instance, is often a coping mechanism for the stress of a dynamic and unforgiving environment.<sup>25</sup> This impulsive consumption mirrors the logic of #KaburAjaDulu: if the long-term future (the Stag) is uncertain, the individual prioritizes immediate, tangible rewards (the Hare).<sup>26</sup>

### **b. Digital Escapism and Gaming Disorder**

When physical escape is not yet feasible, Indonesian youth resort to psychological escapism. A 2024 study in Banda Aceh found that 30.8% of adolescents experienced "gaming disorder," with "escape" being one of the most prominent motivators.<sup>27</sup> This internal retreat into fictional realms or social media feeds following digital influencers to find subjective happiness serves as a temporary relief from the "unbearable" reality of government neglect and social pressure.<sup>28</sup>

### **c. The Fragmented Self: Identity in the Digital Era**

The practice of maintaining "multiple accounts" on platforms like Instagram (e.g., "finstas") highlights the fragmentation of identity among Indonesian youth.<sup>29</sup> While their "real" profile may show a productive, nationalist citizen, their "fake" or "private" accounts are often the spaces where the #KaburAjaDulu sentiment is most freely expressed.<sup>30</sup> This digital fragmentation allows them to explore the possibility of leaving without facing the immediate social stigma of being "unpatriotic".<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Devi Mariyani, Yulia Ayriza, and Elina Listianti Widuri, "Exploring Identity and Emotion: A Phenomenological Study of Self-Diagnosis in Gen Z Women," *Jurnal Psikologi Tabularasa* 20, no. 2 (October 2025): 304–16, <https://doi.org/10.26905/jpt.v20i2.15948>.

<sup>25</sup> Sari Sri Handani and Syifa Vidya Sofwan, "The Role of the Vuca Method in Understanding the Phenomenon of Fomo and Doom Spending among the Younger Generation."

<sup>26</sup> Muhammad Fachrie and Herry Wahyudi, "The Dilemmatic Relationship Between Indonesia's Government and Individuals in the Case of Runaway First or #KaburAjaDulu," *KEMUDI: Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan* 10, no. 1 (August 2025): 12–24, <https://doi.org/10.31629/kemudi.v10i1.7321>.

<sup>27</sup> Satria et al., "Gaming Disorder among Adolescent in Indonesia."

<sup>28</sup> Liew Zhi Xin, "Why Young Indonesians Want to 'Run Away' from the Country, and the Cost of a Brain Drain - CNA."

<sup>29</sup> Mashita Phitaloka Fandia Purwaningtyas and Desti Ayu Alicia, "The Fragmented Self: Having Multiple Accounts in Instagram Usage Practice among Indonesian Youth," *Jurnal Media Dan Komunikasi Indonesia* 1, no. 2 (September 2020): 171–81, <https://doi.org/10.22146/jmki.58459>.

<sup>30</sup> Wikke Jansen, "Engagement and Ethics for Digital Ethnography: Reflections from (Online) Indonesia in Times of COVID-19," *International Quarterly for Asian Studies* 55, no. 4 (February 2025): 513–35, <https://doi.org/10.11588/IQAS.2024.4.24576>.

<sup>31</sup> Desk, "Gen Z in Indonesia and the Global 'Escape Culture': Why Many Are Saying #KaburAjaDulu - Saibumi | Uncovering Asia, One Story at a Time," Gen Z in Indonesia and the Global "Escape Culture": Why Many Are Saying #KaburAjaDulu, <https://saibumi.com/en/gen-z-in-indonesia-and-the-global-escape-culture-why-many-are-saying-kaburajadulu/>.

#### 4. Educational Perspectives: Resilience, Emotion Regulation, and the Brain Drain

The #KaburAjaDulu phenomenon represents a critical challenge to the educational goal of fostering "resilience" in the face of adversity. If the most resilient students are the ones choosing to leave, the nation faces an existential crisis.

##### a. The Determinants of Adolescent Resilience

Research in Surabaya has identified several determinants of resilience, including stress experience, access to mental health information, and family harmony. A key finding is that life satisfaction is a major predictor of resilience; those dissatisfied with their lives are over five times more likely to lack the resilience needed to adapt to domestic stressors.<sup>32</sup>

Determinant of Resilience	Impact / Finding
Stress Experience	High academic/financial stress lowers resilience
Life Satisfaction	Dissatisfied youth have 5.09x risk of low resilience
Emotion Regulation	Mediates the link between stressors and resilience
Social Support	Peer and family support act as protective buffers
Cultural Coping	Usage of <i>sabar</i> and <i>ikhlas</i> facilitates adaptive coping

##### b. The "Resilience Paradox" in Indonesian Education

The current Indonesian curriculum emphasizes values such as *sabar* (patience) and *ikhlas* (acceptance). While these values can facilitate resilience when paired with problem-solving, they are increasingly seen by youth as tools for "passive endurance" in the face of exploitation.<sup>33</sup> The #KaburAjaDulu movement is, in essence, a rejection of "resilience as endurance." Instead, youth are redefining resilience as "agency" the ability to proactively remove oneself from a toxic or unsupportive environment.

<sup>32</sup> Riris Diana Rachmayanti Fatwa Sari Tetra Dewi, "Determinants of Adolescent Resilience Levels in Surabaya City, East Java Province, Indonesia," *Kesmas: Jurnal Kesehatan Masyarakat Nasional* 20, no. 1 (February 2025): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.7454/kesmas.v20i1.1949>.

<sup>33</sup> Lynda Yenie Listaunsanti and Jefri Setyawan, "Parental Bereavement and Academic Resilience in Indonesian Adolescents: Emotion Regulation as Mediator and Social Support as Protective Factor," *Nusantara Journal of Behavioral and Social Science* 4, no. 4 (November 2025): 215–24, <https://doi.org/10.47679/njbss.202513244>.

### c. **The Educational Brain Drain: A Hollowed-Out Future**

The threat of brain drain is particularly acute in the education sector itself. If skilled teachers and researchers are the ones most likely to "kabur," the quality of education for future generations will inevitably decline.<sup>3</sup> This creates a "vicious cycle":

- 1) **State Budget Cuts** (Inpres 1/2025) lead to poor facilities and low salaries.
- 2) **Skilled Educators** migrate to countries where their talents are rewarded.
- 3) **Educational Quality** in Indonesia drops, producing less competent graduates.
- 4) **National Stability** is undermined as the gap between domestic skills and global requirements widens.<sup>34</sup>

### 5. **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) as a Strategic Mitigative Framework**

To address the psychological and sociological drivers of #KaburAjaDulu, the Indonesian education system must move beyond traditional rote learning and prioritize Social-Emotional Learning (SEL).

#### a. **The CASEL Framework and Global Evidence**

SEL encompasses the processes through which individuals acquire the skills to manage emotions, set goals, and make responsible decisions.<sup>35</sup> Global meta-analyses show that SEL programs can increase academic standing by over 8 percentile points and significantly reduce emotional distress.<sup>36</sup>

#### b. **Culturally Grounded SEL: The Indonesian Adaptation**

A critical novelty in recent Indonesian research is the emphasis on "culturally mediated" SEL.<sup>15</sup> Unlike Western models that focus on individual self-regulation, the Indonesian context requires an SEL model that bridges global frameworks with local realities like *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation).<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> UMS, "The Brain Drain Effect of #KaburAjaDulu."

<sup>35</sup> Faiz Romli, Ellen Prima, and Abu Dharin, "Social-Emotional Learning Programs In Elementary Schools: Enhancing Student Competencies And Academic Outcomes," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar* 13, no. 2 (December 2025): 320–36, <https://doi.org/10.46368/jpd.v13i2.4722>.

<sup>36</sup> Erna Mena Niman, "Embedding Local Culture in Social Studies: Pathways to Strengthen Social-Emotional Learning in Primary Education," *Frontiers in Education* 10 (October 2025): 1655528, <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2025.1655528>.

<sup>37</sup> Nasution et al., "The Effects Of A Social-Emotional Learning (Sel) Curriculum On Academic Resilience And Prosocial Behavior In High-Poverty Primary Schools At Sdn No.100907 Muara Ampolu I Kecamatan Muara Batangtoru."

SEL Dimension	Standard Description	Indonesian Cultural Mediation
Self-Awareness	Recognizing one's own emotions	Under-supported in current learning <sup>38</sup>
Self-Management	Regulating behavior and stress	Often conflated with passive endurance ( <i>sabar</i> )
Social Awareness	Empathy and perspective-taking	Grounded in <i>gotong royong</i> and communal harmony
Relationship Skills	Building positive connections	Focus on group solidarity and respect
Responsible Decision-Making	Ethical choices in social contexts	Balancing personal agency with family/social duty

Integrating SEL into the social studies curriculum can ensure that learning is not just about gaining knowledge but about building the character and emotional resilience needed to navigate a complex society.<sup>39</sup> Research from SDN No. 100907 Muara Ampolu shows that SEL curricula successfully foster adaptive coping strategies among students in socioeconomically disadvantaged settings, providing a potential model for national implementation.<sup>40</sup>

### c. SEL for Pre-Service Teachers

The success of SEL implementation depends heavily on the "emotional preparedness" of teachers. Currently, there is a gap between the practical demands of the field and the training provided to pre-service teachers. Large-scale surveys involving 933 students across 21 Indonesian universities highlight the need to fully integrate SEL into

<sup>38</sup> Nasution et al.

<sup>39</sup> Niman, "Embedding Local Culture in Social Studies."

<sup>40</sup> Nasution et al., "The Effects Of A Social-Emotional Learning (Sel) Curriculum On Academic Resilience And Prosocial Behavior In High-Poverty Primary Schools At Sdn No.100907 Muara Ampolu I Kecamatan Muara Batangtoru."

the teacher education curriculum to ensure that future educators can create the supportive environments necessary to retain students within the domestic system.<sup>41</sup>

## **6. Policy Implications and Future Outlook: Moving from "Escape" to "Option"**

The #KaburAjaDulu phenomenon should be treated as a "diagnostic moment" for Indonesian policymakers. If leaving becomes the default option for the nation's brightest minds, the risk of becoming a "precariat" nation is real.

### **a. Reforming the Labor Market and Work Culture**

Addressing the "push" factors is essential. This includes enforcing humane workplace norms, ensuring fair wages, and creating transparent career pathways.<sup>42</sup> As noted by the Founder of Drone Emprit, the movement is a response to "unbearable" conditions; therefore, the solution lies in making the domestic environment more bearable and rewarding.

### **b. Restoring Public Trust and Institutional Commitment**

To shift the "Stag Hunt" equilibrium back toward collaboration, the state must restore public trust.<sup>43</sup> This involves not only funding but also moral backing and recognition for excellence. Experts suggest that policies offering incentives and recognition for youth innovation are essential to prevent the mass exodus of technocrats and scientists.

### **c. Education as both the Victim and the Solution**

While education is currently a victim of brain drain, it is also the most effective solution.<sup>44</sup> Improving the quality of higher education and ensuring that degrees are beneficial for professional futures within the country as suggested by research in other brain-drain-affected regions like the Western Balkans can significantly reduce intentions to leave.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Herman Herman et al., "Social Emotional Learning in Pre-Service Early Childhood Teachers: The Key Role of Academic Achievement, ICT Competence and Socioeconomic Status," *Cogent Education* 12, no. 1 (December 2025): 2586315, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2025.2586315>.

<sup>42</sup> Desk, "Gen Z in Indonesia and the Global 'Escape Culture': Why Many Are Saying #KaburAjaDulu - Saibumi | Uncovering Asia, One Story at a Time."

<sup>43</sup> Fachrie and Wahyudi, "The Dilemmatic Relationship Between Indonesia's Government and Individuals in the Case of Runaway First or #KaburAjaDulu."

<sup>44</sup> UMS, "The Brain Drain Effect of #KaburAjaDulu."

<sup>45</sup> Nina Petreska, Jana Prodanova, and Ljupco Kocarev, "Should I Leave My Country? Higher Education Value Shaping Students' Satisfaction and Brain Drain Intentions in Western Balkans," *SAGE Open* 13 (November 2023): 1-19, <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231208770>.

Recommendation	Implementation Strategy	Future Outlook
Institutionalize SEL	Embed SEL in the national curriculum (K-12)	Improved resilience and social cohesion
Labor Market Reform	Enforce fair wage laws and toxic-culture monitoring	Reduced "push" for migration among Gen Z <sup>46</sup>
Support Innovation	Intellectual property grants and startup stabilization	Retaining tech talent at home <sup>47</sup>
Grief-Sensitive Pedagogy	Training teachers in "emotional scaffolding"	Supporting students through socio-economic shocks <sup>48</sup>
Circular Migration Policies	Engage the diaspora in remote national projects	Turning "Brain Drain" into "Brain Circulation" <sup>49</sup>

### C. CONCLUSION

The #KaburAjaDulu phenomenon is a profound sociological diagnostic that reflects the widening gap between youth aspirations and the socio-economic realities of Indonesia in 2025. This digital protest is fueled by systemic triggers such as educational budget cuts and mass layoffs, which have shifted the rational strategic equilibrium of the youth from national collaboration to individual migration. By examining the portability of cultural capital and the role of digital escapism, it is evident that a lack of institutional trust and environmental mastery is driving the nation's most competent minds toward global markets. To mitigate this crisis, Indonesia must implement a systemic educational reform that integrates culturally mediated Social-Emotional Learning and grief-sensitive pedagogy while simultaneously addressing the structural labor market failures that make "escaping" the only viable path to survival.

<sup>46</sup> Desk, "Gen Z in Indonesia and the Global 'Escape Culture': Why Many Are Saying #KaburAjaDulu - Saibumi | Uncovering Asia, One Story at a Time."

<sup>47</sup> Lynda Yenie Listaunsanti and Jefri Setyawan, "Parental Bereavement and Academic Resilience in Indonesian Adolescents: Emotion Regulation as Mediator and Social Support as Protective Factor," *Nusantara Journal of Behavioral and Social Science* 4, no. 4 (November 2025): 215–24, <https://doi.org/10.47679/njbss.202513244>.

<sup>48</sup> Listaunsanti and Setyawan, "Parental Bereavement and Academic Resilience in Indonesian Adolescents."

<sup>49</sup> Listaunsanti and Setyawan, "Parental Bereavement and Academic Resilience in Indonesian Adolescents."

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