
Diaspora Diplomacy by IISMA Awardees in the UK in 2021-2023

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ABSTRACT

Globalization has broadened the diplomatic arena to include non-state actors, with diaspora being one of them. International students, as an educational diaspora, possess a unique potential as diplomatic agents, especially those intentionally formed and sent by the state, such as the awardees of the Indonesian International Student Mobility Awards (IISMA). This research aims to who are these awardees of IISMA and their effort to run for diplomacy, also to describe how the IISMA's awardees fulfill the diaspora diplomacy in the UK during the 2021-2023 period. This research is conducted under the qualitative approach using the methods of digital content analysis (netnography) and using a combined method of digital content analysis (netnography) and in-depth interviews with awardee representatives.. The analysis is framed by the conceptual framework of Alina Dolea (2024), which views diaspora diplomacy as an "assemblage" mediated by emotions through four pillars: Identity and emotional ties, The role of digital media, Diaspora as a category of practice, Emotion as mediator. The findings indicate that IISMA awardees practice diaspora diplomacy through two channels: a formal channel via mandatory IISMA Challenges focusing on cultural promotion, and an informal channel through daily academic and social interactions. Digital media serves a vital role as a space for activity mobilization and identity negotiation as connected migrants. A crucial finding of this research is that these diplomatic practices are not solely driven by state mandates but are strongly mediated by the awardees' personal emotions, such as pride, a moral sense of obligation toward the state, and a genuine desire to improve Indonesia's image abroad.

Keywords: *Diaspora Diplomacy, IISMA, International Students, Diaspora, Emotions*

INTRODUCTION

The blurring of boundaries regarding actors capable of conducting diplomatic activities has led to the emergence of numerous types of diplomacy. With the increasing variety of diplomacy, it has become easier for International Relations (IR) scholars to

observe various actors who legitimately become diplomatic agents. The deployment of a country's citizens to another nation creates an international relations phenomenon, one of which is the formation of a classification of individuals or groups known as the diaspora.

In a piece by Nicholas J. Cull discussing the history of diaspora and how it can serve as a tool for public diplomacy, it is emphasized that the diaspora possesses roles and functions in establishing communication for the government of origin. These points include: disseminating information and positive images, serving as a bridge for cultural exchange, and their involvement in public diplomacy in the digital era (Cull, 2022). A study found a relatively new diaspora phenomenon in the development of diaspora studies, namely the Educational Diaspora. Students undertaking study exchanges can be classified as a diaspora group and actors abroad (Brooks & Waters, 2021).

One phenomenon that has been quite well-known in Indonesia in recent years is the existence of the IISMA (Indonesian International Student Mobility Awards) program, which is a student exchange scholarship program from the Indonesian government. Students who have been selected and accepted to undertake student exchange activities by IISMA are known as IISMA Awardees. IISMA acts as a form of micro-representative of Indonesia as viewed by the world (Benito & Kristiana, 2023). In the implementation of IISMA activities, this program becomes a step for Indonesia to conduct diplomatic activities through meetings between local and international students, as well as lecturers and the community (IISMA News Coordinator, 2023).

This research will focus on IISMA awardees scattered across the UK during the program's duration from 2021 to 2023. The selection of IISMA awardees in the UK makes this research more focused, considering IISMA sends awardees to universities in various countries. International relations have a connection not far from the existence of cooperation and diplomacy; various types of diplomacy have been developed as time progresses. However, this research stems from the lack of studies focusing on the form of diaspora diplomacy by the diaspora abroad. By considering IISMA awardees as part of the diaspora group, the researcher aims to find out the form of diaspora diplomacy carried out by IISMA awardees during the IISMA program from 2021 to 2023 in the UK.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research conducted is descriptive qualitative research. The general nature of qualitative research basically uses data based on words (Miles et al., 2014). This research focuses on diaspora diplomacy efforts by IISMA awardees from 2021-2023 in the UK. These efforts can be seen from how IISMA awardees practice diplomacy while the IISMA program is ongoing and running. The type of data taken constitutes primary and secondary data; these data include data from literature reviews, available documents, books, official webpages, digital media archives, and previous studies conducted to support the validity and reliability of the interview data that has been conducted (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Diaspora diplomacy carried out by IISMA awardees in the UK will focus on fulfilling the pillars proposed by Alina Dolea related to diplomatic efforts carried out by IISMA awardees in the UK from 2021-2023.

DISCUSSION

A. IISMA Awardees in the UK: History and Development

The IISMA program was first announced in 2020, and in 2021 IISMA sent its first cohort of awardees to conduct student exchanges to higher education institutions abroad. The group of IISMA awardees in the UK in 2021 was also relatively limited, with only eight groups of awardees scattered across universities in the UK: University of York, Lancaster University, Newcastle University, University of Birmingham, University of Leeds, Sussex University, University of Glasgow, and The University of Edinburgh. The second year of the IISMA program began to show the maturity of the program organizers in establishing the provisions of activities that can be carried out by IISMA awardees. In 2022, students registering for the IISMA program experienced an almost threefold increase from 2,551 applicants in 2021 rising to 7,501 applicants in 2022, while acceptance only increased by 19.07% from 970 awardees who passed in 2021 to 1,150 awardees who passed the selection in 2022. In the third year the program was held, there were 10,496 participants registered when the program opened, but only 1,132 prospective IISMA awardees passed the selection. The increase of nearly 3,000 registered students compared to 2022 implies that the IISMA program is highly coveted by students; IISMA was also open with a co-funding IISMA program in the implementation of the program this year.

In viewing who the IISMA awardees are, it is proven that IISMA awardees are state ambassadors (*duta negara*). The intended state ambassadors are a group of people sent carrying a full diplomatic mission focused on nation branding from the aspect of creating a positive image and spreading culture in other countries. This also shapes them as a diaspora group formed by design. Besides being considered a planned diaspora group carrying a diplomatic mission, IISMA awardees also fulfill six conditions proposed by Grossman. These findings form a strong argument to support the statement of IISMA awardees as state ambassadors and part of the diaspora.

In viewing IISMA awardees through data, the increase in the number of awardees and partner universities cooperating also plays a role regarding the scope of diplomacy carried out by IISMA awardees. The increase in numbers, both in terms of awardees and partner universities, is one form of cooperation effort carried out between the UK and Indonesia through the "UK-Indonesia Partnership Roadmap 2022-2024". From this cooperation policy, it can be linked to why there was an increase in the number of awardees and partner universities from the UK cooperating with the IISMA program. A news article written by Universities UK International found a statement supporting the development of IISMA in the UK based on cooperation between Indonesia and the UK. This cooperation focuses on how the UK is willing to provide opportunities for Indonesian citizens who wish to obtain "higher education".

Indonesia is seen by the UK as a country with the potential to improve the education development sector; Indonesia also responded to this cooperation seriously by contributing 20% of the state's annual expenditure to the education sector (Universities UK International, 2022). The UK also sees in the data that Indonesia's efforts in sending students to study abroad, especially to the UK, are very high. The demonstration shown by the UK is how the UK became the most targeted country by scholarship recipients from LPDP and IISMA. Through the UK-Indonesia Partnership Roadmap, there was a calculated increase of 43% from 2015 to 2020 regarding forms of cooperation in education and research (Universities UK International, 2022). This cooperation between the UK and

Indonesia became a bridge for the IISMA program to cooperate with universities in the UK, so that the UK ultimately became one of the destination countries with the most partner universities while the IISMA program was running.

The rise and popularity of the UK as a destination country and the large number of universities in the UK cooperating with IISMA was not a desire of IISMA as a whole program to establish that, but rather it was all based on how the Indonesian and UK governments cooperated on behalf of the political interests of each country in an agreement written in policy, namely the *UK-Indonesia Partnership Roadmap 2022 to 2024*. From the data above regarding diplomatic efforts carried out by IISMA awardees in the UK from 2021-2023 and the increase in the number of partner universities cooperating with IISMA, it creates more opportunities for IISMA awardees to get the chance to undertake this study exchange. This is in accordance with how the number of IISMA awardees increased, especially in 2022 when IISMA opened the Vocational IISMA program and opened opportunities for diploma education students to experience this program.

The large number of partner universities cooperating also indicates the increasing number of diplomatic efforts carried out by awardees. The table of diplomatic efforts carried out by IISMA awardees serves as an indicator of how IISMA sees the potential of awardees to carry Indonesia's diplomatic mission abroad. This argument can be proven by how IISMA in 2021 did not have provisions for awardees that were mandatory and covered by certain procedural provisions. In 2021, not all universities carried out activities aimed at celebrating National Heroes' Day through the *Indonesian Youth Pledge Day Celebration* program. Then, looking at the drastic increase in awardee registration enthusiasm in 2022, the IISMA program organizers seemed to want to utilize this moment to help achieve the interests of the Indonesian state in disseminating information through diplomacy. Based on this argument, the *IISMA Challenges* program was born to make this IISMA program more than just a study exchange activity.

The obligation of the *IISMA Challenges* activity program gives IISMA awardees a status where they are considered state ambassadors and diplomats carrying the state's diplomatic mission. This program is mandatory and the comparison can be seen from 2021 where only five universities were found celebrating Youth Pledge Day out of eight universities, then in 2022, 14 universities were found where all their awardees carried out 28 mandatory activities through the *BATIK Challenge* and *Heroes Challenge*. Due to the large number of partner universities cooperating with IISMA in 2022, added with the mandatory provision of the *BATIK Challenge* and *Heroes Challenge* programs that had to be carried out, that is why there was an increase in diplomatic efforts by IISMA awardees in the UK while the program was running from 2021 to 2023.

Then there was a decrease in the number of diplomatic efforts carried out by IISMA awardees from 2022 to 2023. The reduced number of diplomatic efforts does not have a significant value where only 26 diplomatic efforts were found through the *BATIK Challenge* and *Heroes Challenge* out of 28 efforts carried out in 2022. This shortage was caused by IISMA not sending IISMA awardees to the University of Exeter or the University of Exeter not being found as a partner university working with IISMA. This finding did not find strong evidence why the University of Exeter did not become a partner university or why no IISMA awardees were sent.

B. Diaspora Diplomacy by IISMA Awardees in the UK in 2021-2023

From the digital content analysis data found, there are various activities that have an inclination towards the form of diaspora diplomacy efforts carried out by IISMA awardees. The digital content found proves that the many diaspora diplomacy activities by IISMA awardees have fulfilled several pillars; diaspora as a category of practice and the role of digital media as well as the digital nature of the diaspora. These two pillars are the most prominent pillars from the research results through the netnography study. The pillar highlighted can be classified as two dominant pillars because the other two pillars could not be seen or felt through the analysis of available digital content.

The digital footprints left by IISMA awardees on social media not only act as activity reports but become a stage and medium where diaspora diplomacy can be practiced in reality. The form of diplomacy they carry out is born from the intersection between their identity as international students and the responsibility they have as representatives of the nation. This phenomenon will be easier to understand if viewed as a dynamic assemblage. By adopting Dolea's analytical lens, this discussion will look at four dimensions and see the interrelation between the four pillars described by Dolea: how emotional ties and identity negotiation become the main drivers, how the role of digital media mobilizes diplomacy, how their actions are seen as diplomatic practices, and how their emotions become their motivation in practicing diplomacy.

In order to expand the scope of data in this study, a brief interview was conducted with IISMA awardees in the UK in 2021-2023. The 16 IISMA awardees who were willing to be interviewed were given the choice to conduct the interview via two methods: via text-based messages or voice-based messages. 11 out of 16 IISMA awardees were willing to conduct this Q&A process via text messages, four out of 11 sent voice messages when replying to questions, and one out of 16 sent a 22-minute video to tell their experience in undergoing the IISMA program to answer the questions given.

Identity and Emotional Ties

The fulfillment of the identity and emotional ties pillar first came from the group of IISMA awardees at the University of York in 2021. The group of IISMA awardees at this university carried out two activities, namely the celebration of National Batik Day and *Indofest: IISMA York x PPI York*. One of the activities reflecting the identity and emotional ties pillar is through the upload of the National Batik Day celebration activity. In the caption of the upload, the third sentence wrote that although they are far from their country of origin, they are still very proud to use batik as part of the culture of their country of origin. From that sentence, they explained their feelings as part of the Indonesian people (as an identity) who are far from the motherland (*bumi pertiwi*), so they wanted to share the cultural heritage as part of the unique Identity belonging to Indonesians. The caption proves that the holding of this activity was based on how they perceived themselves as part of Indonesian citizens who were living far from their country of origin. This is further strengthened by the cultural identity they want to display to the outside world, with a sense of pride in the identity they hold as Indonesian citizens. This is a tangible form of identity struggle and also the existence of emotional attachment clearly recorded in its traces through digital media archives; the feeling of "in-betweenness" can indeed be explored deeper into each emotion felt by awardees in carrying out this diplomatic activity.

Moving to the groups of IISMA awardees in 2022. From the various *challenges* activities carried out, especially the *batik challenge* and *heroes challenge*, there is one

group of IISMA awardees that fulfills the diaspora diplomacy pillar. That group of IISMA awardees came from Lancaster University. The *Batik Challenge* carried out by the group of IISMA awardees from this university conducted a sales stall opening activity where the proceeds from the sales were donated to an animal shelter in Lancaster. At the stall opened in the middle of this campus area, there were several things sold, and the items sold were part of Indonesian culture. It can be seen from the upload video that there were batik fabrics, keychains and souvenirs of Indonesian ornaments, to Indomie sold to students around Lancaster University. Then in the caption, they wrote that they are "ambassadors" of the Indonesian state at Lancaster University. The sentence proves how the IISMA awardees at Lancaster University understand their identity as state ambassadors who are abroad and are carrying out a diplomatic mission. The sentence proves that they feel the existence of a feeling of "in-betweenness".

The fulfillment of this Identity pillar continued in 2023 by the same IISMA group, namely still from the group of IISMA awardees from Lancaster University. The IISMA awardees of the 2023 cohort from this university carried out several activities reflecting diplomatic efforts through content uploaded to the Instagram belonging to the IISMA awardee group from Lancaster University. In the upload, the IISMA awardees from the University of Lancaster wrote that they as Indonesians proudly wanted to show off and increase awareness of the beauty of batik from Indonesia to the community in Lancaster. Furthermore, an activity aimed at commemorating National Heroes' Day, the IISMA awardees from this university held an event titled SEKUTER: *Semua Kumpul di Lancaster* (Everyone Gathers in Lancaster). This Sekuter event was held with the aim of promoting the variety of Indonesia's cultural richness. The event was enlivened by 30 awardees responsible for the running of the event and visitors from the local community. Various activities carried out included: sharing information related to batik fabric, barong, traditional musical instruments to various Indomie [products], then the performance of the *Geol* Dance and traditional games followed by the visitors. They have succeeded in mentioning their identity as Indonesians who are carrying out an activity that is diplomatic in nature. In the caption of the upload on their social media, words like "as proud Indonesian" were found, indicating that they are part of the Indonesian people who are abroad.

How IISMA awardees can perceive their identity and emotional ties is not something that can be seen explicitly from the digital footprints found alone, but a personal approach is needed to see if indeed these IISMA awardees understand how they place their identity while carrying out diplomatic practices. After conducting interviews with several IISMA awardees in the UK in 2021-2023, several findings were found that could not be found from the digital track records available on the Internet. These findings can fill in some data that was not yet available due to the lack of data from the netnography data extraction in the discussion above.

Various responses from interviews with several IISMA awardees in the UK in 2021-2023 have proven that the practice of diaspora diplomacy is not far from the role of identity and the existence of emotional ties felt or practiced. Like Bertrand, the researcher sees dividing the role of identity and emotional ties can be divided into three sub-categories: social, academic, and also cultural. Although the variety of responses from the IISMA awardees above is not completely the same, the mention between the response of one awardee and other awardees proves that IISMA awardees in the UK in 2021-2023 feel a form of identity that they carry in carrying out diplomatic practices while undergoing the program. Socially, various awardee responses cover how they socially perceive themselves

through attitudes, principles, and thoughts based on awareness and also how they understand the identity embedded in them.

From the academic aspect, several responses from IISMA awardees show how they represent themselves in their activeness in their academic environment. The clearest effort to see is their contribution in trying to insert Indonesia into discussion forums or into the assignments they work on; Silmi with an explanation of socio-political conditions in Indonesia in the *Global Issues* course, Fasya by explaining *dangdut* music in her music course exam, Nurjihan by representing Indonesia in a debate competition with her debate community colleagues, and others. Although the scale is not large, the role of identity in diplomatic practices carried out by IISMA awardees in the UK in 2021-2023 from the academic aspect is a form of their effort to carry out their diplomatic mission from the most basic scale and level.

Culturally, activities whose form is part of cultural promotion are how physical identity has represented their identity. These activities intersect directly with research findings through digital content analysis, where awardees responding to the role of identity in diplomatic practices are clearly visible when they are carrying out various *challenges* activities. However, some awardees also emphasized that outside of these activities they still brought cultural identity into diplomatic practices carried out independently. Various independent diplomatic practices can be seen from how they use batik daily, cook Indonesian food and share it with their *flatmates*, to forms of presentation regarding Indonesian culture when given the opportunity in formal discussion spaces.

From something intrapersonal to technical, these efforts refer to the evidence of them as IISMA awardees being able to represent their Identity as Indonesian citizens when carrying out diaspora diplomacy practices. Other interview responses did not explicitly explain how they represented themselves when carrying out diplomatic practices, but they explained how they realized their identity as Indonesian citizens who were abroad and the moral values they held as a form of maintaining their identity. Furthermore, how they carry out activities based on a sense of emotional bond between fellow Indonesian citizens abroad also makes emotional ties a visible thing from how their diaspora diplomacy is carried out.

Alina Dolea can draw the conclusion of the existence of the role of identity and emotional ties in her research through interviews with her sources regarding things that are intrapersonal, so this research tries to follow in her footsteps with the hope of providing the same results or reactions from her sources. From the interview data above, indeed data collection through interviews is very much needed. Interviews with these IISMA awardees successfully fulfilled the lack of research data from the existing digital content analysis. The attitudes and actions they took while undergoing the IISMA program were not all recorded and uploaded to social media, especially things that were indeed personal.

The Role of Media and the Digital Nature of Diaspora

The fulfillment of the diaspora diplomacy pillar through the role of media and the digital nature of the diaspora can be seen, among others, from the activeness of the awardee groups in using social media platforms and how they publish themselves as part of IISMA awardees. Besides their activeness in social media and representing their identity, they can also use social media as a diplomatic arena where various information they share can be counted as diplomatic efforts through digital media channels. Digital media here does not only come from social media but can also be from news pages or portals, interview videos, or anything whose track record can be seen via the internet.

The digital nature of the diaspora according to Dolea's view is how these diasporas have interwoven relationships between migrant groups or with other diasporas. This nature is also called by Dolea "connected migrants," which indicates that although the diaspora of a country is already widespread, they will always be able to establish connections and communication with other diaspora or migrant groups. From the IISMA awardee groups in 2021 recorded carrying out diplomatic practices, the most prominent group came from the IISMA awardee group of the University of York and the University of Sussex. IISMA awardees from the University of York worked together with the PPI York group in the *Indofest* event. The form of cooperation carried out with PPI York was to invite the Indonesian diaspora living in York to celebrate Youth Pledge Day Together there. The event asked attendees to use batik clothes and aimed to interconnect the Indonesian diaspora in York.

One of the activities that most highlighted the fulfillment of the pillar of the role of digital media and the digital nature of the diaspora was through the activity *Tales Around the UK-Ireland* held annually by IISMA awardees in the UK and Ireland as part of the *IISMA Challenges*. The event held by IISMA awardees from the UK and Ireland titled *Tales from Around UK-Ireland* was a joint event between awardees scattered in the UK and Ireland. This joint Talk show event proves the digital nature of the diaspora known as "connected migrants" because besides awardees establishing relationships between foreign students or local community-government groups there, they are also interconnected between IISMA awardees of different universities. In this event, parties involved included: Chairman of PPI UK 22/23 and Chairman of PPI Ireland 22/23 as opening speakers, Head of the IISMA Program and the Indonesian Ambassador to the UK as keynote speakers, and the Education and Culture Attaché of the Indonesian Embassy in London as the closing speaker. On the other hand, the awardees involved as speakers, moderators, and hosts in this event came from various universities, including: University of College Dublin, University of Edinburgh, Lancaster University, University of Leeds, University College Cork, University of Glasgow, and University College London.

The discussion above has also been supported by the responses of IISMA awardees directly through the short Q&A interview process that has been carried out. Overall, the awardees' responses agreed that the role of digital media is very important, especially social media. The social media they described existed in terms of group social media and also [individual] groups. Everyone agreed that group social media is the key to how IISMA awardees can communicate and provide information and make it their diplomatic stage. On the other hand, the use of individual social media has many variations.

Collectively the responses of IISMA awardees in the UK in 2021-2023 agreed that the role of digital media is very important both for the country of origin and audiences abroad. This also becomes a new view that the form of diplomatic practice carried out through social media is not only to the public abroad, but also the importance of maintaining-establishing relationships and carrying out diplomacy to the country of origin regarding their existence abroad. Many responses from IISMA awardees focused on how social media plays a role in disseminating their activities in order to fulfill the obligations of the *challenges* program given. This still intersects with the research findings through digital content analysis above. All forms of information shared by IISMA awardees while undergoing this program are shared through the group's Instagram account because it has a larger scope.

However the use of social media by each individual IISMA awardee also has its own role in fulfilling their diplomatic mission whether they realize it or not. As done by Eki, he

wanted to illustrate that he is part of a diaspora group, so he shared uploads of his activities to create an image that Indonesians have high family values even though they are far from the country of origin. Then how Silmi and Rachel indirectly consider themselves as "influencers" although their target scope is different, such as Rachel who is more responded to by her friends from Newcastle University and Silmi who communicates-diplomats more to people from her country of origin. To emphasize whether consciously or not, with the contribution of IISMA awardees sharing event invitations or capturing their moments by uploading their activities, it has become part of the role of social media in diaspora diplomacy.

The digital nature of the diaspora "connected-migrants" can be seen from the responses of IISMA awardees who mentioned that they use social media to contact and establish relationships with other groups and communities, especially the Indonesian diaspora abroad. Proven by how their responses revolve around how they often hold activity agendas together with PPI and fellow IISMA awardee groups from other universities. This finding proves that the digital nature of the diaspora focusing on "connected migrants" will always be found because they will realize that they will need communication and establish relationships with people or groups who have the same *values* as them.

The proof of this digital diaspora nature is based on the response of an IISMA awardee in the UK, namely Eki from the University of Lancaster 2021. Eki mentioned that social media plays a big role for him because he is able to interact directly with various communities and groups, including fellow Indonesian diaspora, namely PPI. Besides communication carried out to the PPI group, Eki also used his social media to try to communicate with IISMA awardees from other universities. Of course, this intersects with the findings of the digital content analysis above; IISMA awardees use their group Instagram to copy [reciprocally] establish relationships between IISMA awardee groups from one university to another.

Of the many responses explaining how digital media provides a significant role in mobilizing their diplomatic interests, it is a pity that no one mentioned how the *challenge* program titled "Tales Around the UK – Ireland" as part of their efforts to maximize the role of social media as a tool that mobilizes their interests. However, this does not close the reality that according to the understanding of the pillars given by Alina Dolea in the theory she proposed. The establishment of relationships carried out between diasporas in mobilizing their interests is already included in the effort to fulfill diaspora diplomacy through the role of digital media and also proves the existence of the digital nature of the diaspora known as "connected-migrants".

Diaspora as a Category of Practice

If one wants to look at the common thread from the discussion of the fulfillment of the diaspora pillar as a category of practice, all forms of efforts and actions that claim that they are part of their country of origin are part of the fulfillment of diaspora as a category of practice. The form of involvement and cooperation between IISMA and other parties, groups, or communities is part of the form of diaspora as a practice. Diplomacy is seen as a way to obtain or fulfill the interests of each of the two parties. In this context, IISMA awardees do not only work with fellow groups or diaspora communities from the country of origin (a form of *connected migrants* above), but also how they can diplomatize their interests to fulfill the mission and responsibilities they carry. The relationships established to form events as carried out in the *batik challenge* and *heroes challenge* activities prove

that IISMA awardees are able to apply diplomatic practices. As Dolea revealed, diaspora as a practice does not look at "who is considered as diaspora in diplomating?" but "what does the diaspora do to fulfill that diplomacy?". With that, all efforts carried out by each group of IISMA awardees from various universities both from 2021 to 2023 or from the series of *Youth Pledge Day* and *IISMA Challenges* activities, are all efforts to fulfill diaspora as a category of practice. These efforts cannot be separated from the cooperation between communities and groups that participate in enlivening or succeeding the events formed by the awardee groups.

From the results of the digital content analysis above, it can be seen that the proof of diaspora as a category of practice better explains efforts that are "extravagant". Large official events and carrying the name of Indonesia along with the Indonesian people involved in the success of the event are the meaning of the word "extravagant" itself. However, it needs to be remembered again that what is done on social media does not all reflect their actions and attitudes when the diplomatic process is running, therefore a deeper approach is needed regarding diaspora as a practice at the Individual level.

The responses and feedback of IISMA awardees regarding diaspora as a category of practice vary, but it has been determined that on a basic scale, the pillar of diaspora as a category of practice has been fulfilled in carrying out diaspora diplomacy. The findings in this discussion will explain several points obtained from data taken from interviews with IISMA awardees regarding how they consider that the role of the diaspora here is no longer as an entity, but as a category of practice in carrying out diaspora diplomacy.

Overall responses from awardees while undergoing the IISMA program broadly explain how they try to carry out diplomatic practices. The easiest form of effort to see is from what happens in their social environment. Interview findings prove one of the ways of their efforts is how they respond to their social environment when being asked things about their country of origin. IISMA awardees provide various types of information so that Indonesia can be better known by many international circles.

Emotion as Mediator

The involvement of emotion as a motivation and also a mediator for IISMA awardees carrying out diplomacy collectively can be seen from how they have a sense of responsibility as IISMA awardees representing the state and also the demand for responsibility from the program organizers regarding the activities they carry out. Various activities they carry out are the fruit of the form of pride and sense of responsibility they shoulder. It was also found the existence of emotional involvement shown by the IISMA awardee group from the University of York in 2021 commemorating National Batik Day. In their upload, the IISMA awardee group from this university pinned the sentence:

"Miles away from Ibu Pertiwi, and we're still proudly wearing our stunning batik to showcase our cultural heritage to the Great Britain in commemoration of Batik Day" (IISMA York, 2021)

The caption sentence symbolizes the sense of emotion possessed by IISMA awardees collectively regarding the implementation of the Batik Day program long before the *IISMA Challenges* program provisions existed. The caption proves that IISMA awardees, although far from their country of origin, still hold high pride in the culture from their place of origin, and this celebration is a tangible form of diplomatic efforts they carry out and is based on the emotional involvement they have.

From the findings and results of the digital content analysis above, the researcher has determined that emotion has a role for the diaspora in carrying out diplomatic missions or diplomatic practices they carry out, but to support these findings, the researcher has conducted interviews to support the discussion above. The interview response results prove that IISMA awardees certainly bring feelings and emotions when carrying out diplomatic practices and that is not only for one or two activities, but how they carry out diplomatic practices through the pillars above.

The overall responses of IISMA awardees fall into these categories, both from those reasoned personally and the existence of collective responsibility. This is a form of proof that the role of emotion as a motivator for IISMA awardees to diplomitize indeed exists and is diverse. Dolea's understanding regarding the emotions involved can be supportive or critical is clearly visible from the responses of IISMA awardees. From the sense of pride in culture, state values, and also in the identity they possess to the sense of criticism towards their disappointment in the country of origin, it turns out to be indeed proven from the responses given.

CONCLUSION

Drawing a conclusion from the research results above, the IISMA awardee groups have fulfilled all diaspora diplomacy pillars proposed by Dolea. The data collection technique from the netnography study and interviews with IISMA awardees provided diverse results because of the many aspects that can be seen, researched, and studied. The data results by digital track records available, both in the form of videos, report documentation, news and article interviews, and content uploads on social media are part of data collection via digital content analysis. The data results in the form of responses, feedback, and answers are part of data collection through interviews with IISMA awardees.

Based on the findings and limitations encountered during the research process, the researcher formulates several suggestions as follows:

1. Academic Suggestions (Methodological):

This research found that the netnography method (digital content analysis) has limitations in capturing deep emotional dimensions. Digital footprints tend to be performative and curated. Therefore, future research using Alina Dolea's framework is suggested to place more emphasis on phenomenological methods or interviews from the beginning. This is important to explore "silent diplomacy" or informal interactions that are not recorded on social media but have a significant impact on foreigners' perceptions of Indonesia. Additionally, future research can expand the focus on the aspect of academic *knowledge transfer* as a form of intellectual diplomacy, not just fixated on cultural diplomacy.

2. Practical Suggestions (For IISMA Organizers/Government):

Research findings indicate a shift in the burden of the IISMA program, from a focus on self-development (*soft-skills*) to becoming the pivot of the state's diplomatic mission through a series of mandatory *challenges*. Although awardees are able to carry it out with high creativity and independent costs, this can become a double burden. It is suggested that the government or IISMA organizers not only provide a "diplomatic mandate" but also provide concrete support in the form of special funding for cultural

activities or the provision of promotional materials (such as official state merchandise) that are standardized. This will optimize cultural diplomacy output without sacrificing the students' main focus in pursuing knowledge. Additionally, pre-departure briefing should not only focus on technical matters but also on strengthening insights into Indonesia's strategic issues (socio-political), considering awardees are often faced with critical questions regarding domestic conditions by the international community.

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