

Uncovering the Cause of Indonesia's Brain Drain: The Case of #KaburAjaDulu

Muhammad Fachrie¹ , Herry Wahyudi² 

¹ Public Administration, Study Program, Universitas Tidar, Magelang, Indonesia

² International Relations Study Program, FISIP, Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji, Tanjung Pinang, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: muhammadfachrie@untidar.ac.id

Article Info

Keyword:

Brain Drain;
Stag Hunt;
KaburAjaDulu;
Indonesia

Abstract: This study examines the #KaburAjaDulu case in light of Indonesia's brain drain issue. In that instance, individuals protested the Indonesian government on Twitter and declared they would not be returning to Indonesia after graduating. Because it has raised public concern about the situation and condition in Indonesia, it has drawn attention from both domestic and foreign audiences. Although the cause and consequences of this case are explained in a number of articles, there isn't one that takes an international relations (IR) perspective. This study attempts to fill that knowledge gap by comprehending the incentives and difficulties that both actors encounter. Using a qualitative methodology, this study interprets the case using the Stag Hunt game theory. The research findings were created by organizing and analyzing data that was gathered from a range of sources, such as books, scholarly journals, online news, and other pertinent publications. The results imply that mistrust and a lack of commitment on both sides strain the relationship between the government and individual scholars. Scholars' skepticism toward official commitments has been fueled by the failure of numerous government policies to create a supportive work environment. Some academics have responded by refusing to accept these terms in favor of the more alluring career opportunities found abroad.

Article History : Received 16-06-2025, Revised 05-07-2025, Accepted: 13-08-2025

How to Cite :

Fachrie, M., & Wahyudi, H. (2025). The Dilemmatic Relationship Between Indonesia's Government and Individuals in the Case of Runaway First or #KaburAjaDulu. *KEMUDI : Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan*, 10(1), 12-24. <https://doi.org/10.31629/kemudi.v10i1.7321>

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the increase in skilled migration creates big difficulties because losing talented people weakens a country's long-term capacity for economic growth and innovation (Docquier & Rapoport, 2012). Many young Indonesians have popularized the hashtag "#KaburAjaDulu" on Twitter as a protest for the country's current socio-political and economic conditions (Alkaf, 2025; Kusumaningrum et al., 2025; Zaennudin, 2025). They worry that going back to Indonesia would mean giving up career ambitions and even personal safety, saying

they face unfair chances at home, tough competition, and are drawn to better jobs abroad (Kompas, 2025; Marzuki et al., 2024; Ritonga, 2025). Subsequently, this case has grown into a big social movement, which has become a symbol for Indonesian professionals and scholars working overseas. This case links to the issue of skilled worker migration from their native countries and then creates the trend known as brain drain, which is the voluntary migration carried out by educated professionals who want better employment conditions overseas along with political stability and educational research facilities. Besides, this case has a strong correlation with political elements, including instability, corruption, and a lack of faith in authorities (Jöns & Cranston, 2019; Vega-Muñoz et al., 2024). Generally, this case not only shows the complexity of globalization, but it also needs urgent action from different groups to handle its repercussions.

In the Global South, many countries have struggled with brain drain. They struggle with the challenge of losing highly skilled individuals. To respond to that challenge, India and Nigeria have established programs that target their overseas citizens because are important for the country's economy and social progress (Chaudhary et al., 2025; Olowolaju et al., 2025). These programs help share knowledge globally while bringing additional revenue back to the home country. Different from India and Nigeria, Indonesia has tried to protect their skilled individuals. However, it has not created the right policies for highly skilled individuals, such as attractive work environment and career opportunities. For many cases, some of the individuals did not return home and even changed their nationality. Lembaga Pengelola Dana Pendidikan (LPDP), the national scholarship institution, found that 413 awardees out of 35,536 awardees do not return home (Kasih, 2023). Ideally, the government gives the scholarship to individuals for national interest purposes. Even worse, many Indonesian skilled workers changed their nationalities. From 2019 to 2022, at least 3,912 Indonesians acquired Singaporean citizenship, showing the urgency of this problem (Alfajri et al., 2024; UGM, 2025b).

To respond this case, media publications and opinion pieces have tried to explain the issue from economic, social, and political angles. However, there is a lack of journal articles that analyze the dynamic interaction between actors in this case (Alkaf, 2025; Kusumaningrum et al., 2025; Putri Sari Margaret Julianty Silaban et al., 2025; Zaennudin, 2025). Although #KaburAjaDulu has dominated public debate, there is no study that explore through the lens of International Relations (IR). In fact, it is more than just a trending hashtag because it points to a bigger governance problem in keeping skilled professionals in the country. Besides, Stag Hunt is relevant to game theory because previous research discuss migration issue by using Stag Hunt. For instance, the article entitled "Migration and the Evolution of Conventions" presents an evolutionary game theory model that examines how migration affects the development and persistence of social conventions (Bhaskar & Vega-Redondo, 2004). Briefly, by using Stag Hunt, this research will explain the cause of Indonesia's brain drain in the case of #KaburAjaDulu in order to understand the dynamic of government and individuals.

The Research Gap of #KaburAjaDulu

The hashtag #KaburAjaDulu emerged in early 2025 as a social media trend reflecting widespread young Indonesians' frustration with domestic conditions. Scholars note that it reflects public anxiety regarding economic, social, and political conditions in Indonesia, especially among the younger generation (Julio Salas et al., 2025; Tampubolon et al., 2025). It has been used on platforms like TikTok and Twitter, or X, to express the willingness of individuals to study or work abroad. In these days, contemporary analyses describe #KaburAjaDulu as a form of "cultural resistance" or satirical protest. For instance, one news account called this phenomenon as "cultural resistance movement" that highlighted increasing frustration over a perceived lack of job opportunities and unhappy with government policies (Yuniar, 2025). From a practical standpoint, young people are expressing that they perceive little opportunities at home (UGM, 2023). Moreover, a recent opinion piece characterizes #KaburAjaDulu as an organic protest against norms that equate hard work with worthiness, blending humor and defiance as youth grapple with burnout and financial insecurity (Maspul, 2025). Unlike an escapism, this movement fits with the view that Indonesian youths are signaling the need for big changes in the system.

According to research data, this sentiment reflects matches real economic and social situations. The Indonesian Bureau of Statistics reported that 7.47 million individuals remained jobless at the end of 2024, and among them 842,378 were university graduates (Putri, 2025). The majority of recent graduates face significant challenges when seeking secure employment with decent salaries. Sometimes, they decide to move away from their home country because of inferior job prospects alongside insufficient compensation and educational incompatibility with market demands, which reflects the migration process described by classic theories. Various international factors strongly attract people. First, the international job market gives Indonesian students the chance to earn more money, achieve better work-life harmony, and develop professional connections (Putri, 2025). Second, the closeness of Singapore and Australia attracts Indonesian workers because they offer excellent salary packages and maintain supportive office environments (Putri, 2025). Third, the domestic economic decline and unfair policies and social disillusionment alongside corruption perceptions push and pull factors work together that offer economic prospects and better labor conditions and international educational and career options (Putri, 2025; Yuniar, 2025). Furthermore, other research demonstrates Indonesia's substantial progress in boosting nurse production, maintaining quality standards, and making work conditions better for nurses and equalizing healthcare delivery across regions (dos Santos Gomes, 2024).

The academic community currently examines #KaburAjaDulu through various theoretical frameworks. First, the cultural capital approach reveals that Indonesian youth migration patterns emerge because of their acquired embodied skills and educational qualifications (Bourdieu, 2018). Cultural capital, according to Bourdieu, includes knowledge and skills that remain inside the body through education, language abilities, and cosmopolitan orientations. Indonesian students and professionals who have completed their formal education and gained exposure to international environments possess strong cultural assets, which they can utilize during overseas opportunities. Second, through his theory of social capital, his research explains how migration becomes more achievable when diaspora networks and alumni abroad provide both opportunity information and supportive communities (Bourdieu, 2018). The growing popularity of #KaburAjaDulu stems from the cultural and social advantages that most young Indonesians now possess to envision life outside their country. University degrees represent institutionalized cultural capital that transforms into economic benefits, while international employment markets increasingly seek the abilities of Indonesian graduates (Yuniar, 2025).

Subsequently, many individuals have been attracted to working and living in developed countries due to proper working opportunities. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development reported that about 330,000 Indonesian-born residents were living in its 12 member countries by 2010 (Utomo, 2011). Indonesia also has 62,828 outbound international students, which represents a 29 percent increase from 2017 and 48,550 Indonesian students studying abroad (Walker, 2025). Besides, many research become opinion pieces. Even the data from diaspora networks is patchy. For example, the Asia Foundation report estimated that in 2010 only about 73,500 Indonesian-born people resided in Australia; however, that number has significantly grown among highly skilled cohorts, which are unreported (Utomo, 2011). Likewise, the Indonesian government's own diaspora mapping remains rudimentary. In short, there is a gap in data and conceptual clarity, which means a lack of understanding the motivation of many young Indonesians.

Developed countries actively encourage skilled migrants to come to their nations, which leads to a beneficial "brain gain" for destination countries but also a potential "brain drain" for the countries that send these migrants. In Southeast Asia, they engage in active recruitment of professional individuals because their populations are growing older. According to data, the workforce in Indonesia consists mainly of young employees, while Japan and Australia face aging populations. A growing need for labor forces in foreign countries creates opportunities for young Indonesians to work overseas. An analysis of migration patterns demonstrates that skilled migrant visas to Australia included approximately 1,621 Indonesians during 2010 to 2011, which represented a 66 percent increase from the previous year (Utomo, 2011). Furthermore, the latest official information from Indonesian government statistics shows that

many Indonesian citizens have gained foreign citizenship or obtained long-term visas, particularly 4,000 Indonesians who became Singaporean citizens between 2019 and 2022 (Putri, 2025). Shortly, the small absolute numbers of these cases represent a pattern that indicates that Indonesian educated youth are increasingly moving to other countries and support identifying #KaburAjaDulu as an element of the broader worldwide talent exchange movement.

Besides, the #KaburAjaDulu movement has become a focal point in a polarized discussion about government decisions. Certain government representatives consider it an act of disloyalty, while others label it as irresponsible behavior. According to Nusron Wahid, who serves as Minister of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning/Head of the National Land Agency, the movement exists because people lack patriotism and nationalism (Sunardi, and Yunus, 2025). Vice Minister of Labor Immanuel Gerungan made a public statement that said, "Just go if you want, and it's fine if you stay away" (Praditya, 2025). Several people have transformed the hashtag toward national service opportunities because a youth envoy proposed that overseas Indonesians could serve their country through foreign currency remittances. Social media users have created intense debates between patriotic advocates who bid farewell and cynical opponents who claim escape is the sole rational response to a burning Indonesian state (Tehusijarana, 2025). Moreover, the current situation shows conflicting opinions because several observers believe the movement indicates a national emergency, while others interpret it as a rational response to poor governance. A social scientist from UGM described #KaburAjaDulu as "critical satire" that youth use to express their dissatisfaction with social and political conditions instead of showing disloyalty (UGM, 2023). The forecast indicates that Indonesia will experience severe labor shortages because skilled workers who leave the country may not come back (UGM, 2025b). The discussion revolves around opposing principles because neoliberal policies support workforce mobility, while nationalism emphasizes workforce retention.

Even though there are many discussions of that, a lack of journal article discuss this case, especially in the perspective of IR. In reality, the current debate about #KaburAjaDulu relies heavily on journalistic investigations and social media observations instead of employing formal research processes. These sources evaluated official government messages on this subject through literary analysis methods; however, they did not generate any original survey or interview outcomes (Julio Salas et al., 2025). Practically, there is a survey conducted by YouGov that explains 41 percent of Gen Z participants plan to leave Indonesia in upcoming years; however, it is not enough to explain the dynamic relationship between actors (Rahardyan, 2025; Ubaidillah, 2025). Besides, this movement serves as a sign, which shows how contemporary people suffer from collective exhaustion while they seek relief from their daily stressors and uncertain times (Nurmuhaemin, 2025). Furthermore, the phrase starts as a joke, but it later demands a serious discussion of factors that force people to move to other countries and pushes people to turn jokes into serious talks about change. Thus, there is a gap to explore the complex interaction between government and individual to comprehensively understand this issue.

The academic community remains debate about the nature of brain drain. Several scholars support the idea that brain circulation and diaspora networks create transnational knowledge movements as an alternative to the traditional view of brain drain. The academic study completed by Jöns found that circular academic mobility to Germany from the 1950s to the early 2000s both reconnected the nation with worldwide science and demonstrated the intricate connections between transnational knowledge networks and academic partnerships (Jöns, 2009). In the case of Indonesia, it may transform promising brain drain into brain gain by adopting a progressive approach that focuses on workforce needs for sustainable national development (Sarjito, 2025). For prestigious scholarship, LPDP has offered study abroad through various scholarships while maintaining regulations for graduates to return home after completing their studies. It permits their awardees to pursue international opportunities for two years after completing their education despite the opposition to this policy (Mashabi, Sania and Prastiwi, 2025). However, national universities face challenges because they receive inadequate financial support and fail to achieve global expansion. Back to the perspective of

Bourdieu above, it indicates that people with resources will depart unless their native environment provides opportunities to accumulate and utilize cultural capital for research and development and PhD career prospects (Bourdieu, 2018). Clearly, the situation in Indonesia is obvious to experts who reveal that a large number of scientific professionals avoid their home country because of insufficient wages and underdeveloped support networks (UGM, 2025b).

To sum up, this case has made us aware of the lack of theoretical and empirical aspects to explore. Theoretically, the existing research views #KaburAjaDulu as a protest movement by Generation Z that combines economic system dissatisfaction with governance dissatisfaction through international mobility terms. Besides, the research field also has a lack of essential information about migration because of its failure to gather specific data and track changes over time and its neglect of research on how young individuals make their migration choices. It should examine all aspects of the changing relationship between government and people. Furthermore, sometimes, the international relations perspective remains untouched despite the multiple domestic and international factors that shape this case. While Bourdieu's theories about cultural and social capital show how particular individuals have the means to leave, the country's migration models of push-pull theory explain fundamental reasons behind migration.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative method. It involves examining occurrences in their natural settings with the goal of comprehending or interpreting the meaning of the case (Creswell, 2013). It uses an iterative process to develop scientific knowledge through the discovery of new distinctions during the study of the phenomenon (Aspers & Corte, 2019). This method explores the case of #KaburAjaDulu and tries to explain why the cause of the case of #KaburAjaDulu. It uses theoretical-conceptual analysis, which provide an explanation and interpretation of the researched phenomena and clarify assumptions about it (Luft et al., 2022). Besides, this research includes three operational steps that serve as its framework. First, it creates a background and literature review that identifies gaps in knowledge. The second one, the research uses its research work on secondary sources that include books, journal articles, online newspaper articles, publications, and other references in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of this case. Third, this research analyzes the case of #KaburAjaDulu. Compared to other game theories, Stag Hunt is relevant because it demonstrates how two actors face mutual distrust and decide to not take the biggest outcome. At last, this research will result in findings based on the analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research uses Stag Hunt theory to examine strategic choices of individuals and government. It demonstrates how cooperation among people leads to better outcomes for everyone when the risk of failure from non-cooperation exists. In this theory, actors tend to select an option with reduced risk even if it provides lower rewards because of their lack of institutional trust. This theory specifically fits in this case because many Indonesians consistently demonstrate low trust in governmental organizations while there is no proper response from the government. It also explores how the dynamic of the relationship between government and individuals works in this case. Theoretically, everyone knew that if he was hungry, he should stay at his leisure to hunt a stag, and when a hare passed through the village, he turned his attention to it. As a result, curiosity is more important than satisfaction, and actors learn how to choose stag or hunt with consequences. In their minds, a stag is not always becoming the best option because a hare is sometimes more possible.

Even though there is only a stag and a hare, the Stag Hunt theory is complex because players have to consider many things. The logical decision of one of the participants in this theory depends on his expectation of the other participant's decision. While pursuing the hare is a single and less beneficial action, hunting the stag together is an example of the strength of collaboration and emphasizes the significance of teamwork in attaining greater success (Skyrms, 2003). It is vital to realize that other participants may not choose to collaborate. In that context, the strategy in this game is risk dominant and reward dominant (Skyrms, 2003).

Furthermore, there is no intrinsic danger in the case of a player opting for hunting hare, as the payoff associated is not subject to what other players do; however, the player loses the possible gain that can be derived from a successful Stag Hunt (Lees, 2022; Skyrms, 2003). Based on Figure 1, players will gain 3.3 as maximum payoff if all players decide to cooperate. In fact, players face a complex situation, where hunting stag is not as easy as hunting hare. If one player decides to not cooperate to hunt stag, the payoff will be higher than the other player who hunts stag alone (2.0 or 0.2). Moreover, hunting hare is a non-risky option for both of them because all players get the same payoff (2.2).

Actors	Stag	Hare
Stag	3.3	0.2
Hare	2.0	2.2

Figure 1. Stag Hunt Payoffs
Source: Heifetz, 2012: 139

Stag Hunt Equilibrium Between Government and Individuals

Figure 2 shows four payoffs in this case. First, the highest joint benefits occur when both the government and individuals work together using the "stag" strategy, which produces the 3.3 outcome that leads to maximum R&D investments and optimal talent retention. Second, the state loses its chance to receive the full cooperation payoff of 2 points when the individual chooses to defect using the "hare" strategy that allows them to gain international opportunities (0.2). Third, if the government refuses to cooperate while the scholar stays committed, the state benefits from their work, but the scholar suffers significant losses (2.0). Finally, when both parties defect, they gain little individually and contribute even less to the domestic system—highlighting that a lack of cooperation leads to poor outcomes (2.2). In theory, mutual commitment is key—not only to prevent brain drain but also to support long-term national development. However, the lack of trust between the government and scholars often pushes both sides into difficult decisions—even when better options exist.

Actors	Individuals Cooperates (Stag)	Individual Defects (Hare)
Government Cooperates	(3.3): When both work together, strong R&D and talent retention result.	(0.2): The state completely loses the stag reward when the scholar leaves while the government recognizes collaboration and the scholar benefits overseas.
Government Defects	(2.0): Despite state defection, the scholar cooperates; the state gains little while the scholar loses.	(2.2): Mutual defection results in modest domestic benefits for both parties and modest individual advantages elsewhere.

Figure 2. Stag Hunt Scenarios for The Case of #Kaburajadulu

Source: Author

Trust between institutions stands as the essential foundation of cooperative theory, as it depends on the belief that governmental entities will honor their commitments to fulfill their promises. The trust that forms the core of cooperative theory encounters consistent destruction in Indonesia due to insufficient funds and execution failures of government policies. Indonesia dedicated 0.28 percent of its GDP to research and development spending during 2020, as reported (UNESCO, 2020). The insufficient financial support for research facilities and

laboratory equipment and digital resource access limitations directly hinder scholars from conducting meaningful studies to advance knowledge production (Hamli Syaifullah, 2024). Besides, the analysis of labor market information indicates a mismatch between educational achievements and employment results among the population. In the period before 2024, 842,378 university degree holders among 7.47 million unemployed Indonesians existed, according to data from the Indonesian Bureau of Statistics (BPS) (Putri, 2025). The data reveals how more than 11.3 percent of unemployed individuals possess university qualifications but fail to find suitable work, which demonstrates a significant gap between academic preparation and professional prospects. As a result, the lack of stable and well-paying positions that follow advanced degree attainment causes scholars to doubt the ability of their domestic academic system to provide proper returns for their educational investments. Moreover, the research shows that when BumDes receives proper management through women's empowerment, youth participation in digitization, and local graduate employment, brain drain decreases while maintaining human resources for village development, and this approach supports long-term growth and enhances community resilience (Asmuni et al., 2020).

The indicators serve as a strong warning signal because governments have repeatedly shown their lack of support for genuine academic partnerships. In the reality, the LPDP scholarship program, which aims to develop worldwide talent, has produced inconsistent outcomes when it comes to students returning to their home country. As a result, these skilled individuals choose other options for their careers. Based on data, it shows that 35,536 scholars received educational funding from LPDP for international studies, yet only 1.16 percent (413 students) did not return home by 2023 because they chose defection over the uncertain prospects of domestic reintegration (Kasih, 2023). Besides, the Kampus Merdeka program has not succeeded in achieving its industry-academia collaboration objectives (Nurita, 2021). Furthermore, scholars lose their trust in cooperation each time fund disbursements get delayed and financial resource disbursement methods become unclear and when the administration shows favoritism in hiring practices.

The Collective Dimension of Hashtag Activism

The collective force of digital activism amplifies the impact of individuals' decisions to defect. In the case of #KaburAjaDulu, the hashtag has evolved from personal dissatisfaction to form a movement that unites people around their shared struggles and fosters cultural solidarity. Social media analyses reveal recurring themes of public dissatisfaction, particularly toward political instability, restrictions on academic freedom, and governance failures (Julio Salas et al., 2025; Maspul, 2025). As a result, digital activism becomes a public sphere for individuals or scholars who have a defection decision. Additionally, the use of humor and satire by young Indonesians functions as an effective method for expressing disagreement while building unity among people who experience similar problems. Survey findings support the existence of strong collective protest among people. According to a YouGov study, around 41% of Generation Z respondents said they would seriously consider migration to abroad within the next five years (Rahardyan, 2025). This strong migration intent reflects how people view defection through peer networks as both a strategy for personal survival and a form of political expression. Furthermore, social media's viral dynamics create a feedback loop, where each new migration post reinforces the belief that leaving is a rational and acceptable response to institutional failure. Overall, this case becomes a lesson learned for the government because digital activism becomes a public sphere for skilled individuals in communicating their perspective and even protest, and mark it as collective dimensions for actors.

The Push-Pull Dynamics of #KaburAjaDulu

The Stag Hunt theory highlights the role of trust in cooperation and explains the individual's calculation for defection. To explore this issue, the research examines the analysis of "push" factors in the domestic environment against "pull" factors abroad. In such scenarios, both the government and individuals weigh the consequences of their respective choices. Prabowo's emphasis on fiscal efficiency offers a potentially promising strategy to reduce unnecessary expenditures in higher education institutions; however, it is crucial to evaluate its

implications for critical sectors like education to safeguard the quality of long-term national development (Sidik A & Intan, 2025). Reckless policy implementation could damage the government's credibility in the eyes of skilled professionals overseas. Abroad, attractive opportunities—such as advanced research infrastructure and supportive professional networks—serve as pull factors that attract skilled individuals to live and work in there. Similarly, domestic circumstances (including stagnant earnings, a lack of support for research, and opaque hiring processes) are powerful inducements to leave the country. Thus, domestic policy shortcomings drive individuals away, while the relative advantages offered by neighboring countries act as powerful incentives to migrate.

Moreover, multiple sources show the existence of push factors in different environments. First, public university lecturers in Indonesia work an average of 56.7 hours per week but earn only Rp 14,113 per hour—lower than the Rp 18,566 earned by general workers for a 40-hour week. With a monthly income of just \$207, the salary-to-minimum wage ratio (1.32) highlights the urgent need for better financial recognition and support (Rosalina et al., 2025b). Second, the article published by Kompas shows that lecturers devote 70 hours to work every week, which exceeds the 40-hour limit established by Undang-Undang (UU) Nomor 6 Tahun 2023 (Rosalina et al., 2025a). This situation contributes to an unhealthy work-life balance among lecturers. In addition, systemic barriers reduce the appeal of remaining in Indonesia, prompting researchers to look for better recognition and career prospects abroad.

On the pull side, developed nations attract skilled individuals with better opportunities, influencing their career decisions. According to UNESCO, 62,828 Indonesian students studied abroad in 2022—a 29% increase from 48,550 in 2017 (Walker, 2025). This pattern indicates both an increase in available scholarships and a strengthening belief among Indonesian youth that studying and working overseas offers more favorable outcomes for their future. Notably, nearly four thousand Indonesians became citizens of Singapore between 2019 and 2022—illustrating a rise in strategic migration toward economically advanced neighbors offering stability, competitive salaries, and robust welfare systems (Alfajri et al., 2024; UGM, 2025a). These push and pull factors should prompt the government to reassess current policies, as every skilled individual abroad represents a lost national asset. The state must create a more attractive and supportive environment at home.

Toward Cooperation: Policy Prescriptions and Institutional Reforms

The equilibrium of defection between #KaburAjaDulu parties can only be stopped through a complete policy reset with trust-based changes. The solution to defection problems requires policymakers to simultaneously work on both the fundamental causes behind defection and the methods of enforcing policies. They have to demonstrate their genuine dedication to knowledge production through a multi-year plan that increases R&D spending to 1 percent of GDP because this will improve scholars' anticipated cooperation benefits (Huaxia, 2025). They have to implement an automatic inflation mechanism with clear performance goals to guarantee continuous funding after each election period. Besides, LPDP scholarship agreements should be transformed into legally binding contracts from their current non-binding status. As a result, students may develop different expectations about government support through a tiered system that includes more debt forgiveness for those who complete their studies early or on time and transparent alumni council inspections.

Moreover, the establishment of a centralized digital platform for academic hiring, promotions, and performance reviews will hold nepotism at bay while restoring meritocracy through quarterly audits conducted by civil society representatives. This platform would enhance the working and career environment in Indonesia. Besides, the establishment of diaspora-funded research centers alongside joint grant funding and visiting fellowships will create sustainable brain circulation from defected individuals. Learning from India and Nigeria, Indonesia should view diaspora scholars as beneficial contributors, which will enable the country to gain external expertise for national development. Furthermore, the implementation of regular performance audits focusing on graduate employment statistics and research output and repatriation rates will enable the continuous feedback loop needed to enhance educational

policies. Overall, through annual collaboration with academic societies and government organizations to publish "State of Scholars" reports, the institution will establish its commitment to continuous development and enhance its transparency.

Limitations and Future Research Trajectories

The analysis of this research uses strong secondary data triangulation; however, it faces challenges due to issues concerning detail level, population representation, and data timing. When researchers combine national numbers, they lose track of differences between geographic areas and academic fields regarding people who move, while qualitative data focuses heavily on digitally literate urban academics, which may exclude rural and non-traditional voices. Researchers need to implement longitudinal cohort studies that follow LPDP along with scholarship recipients for ten years to evaluate their real return rates and domestic innovation system contributions. Besides, the research can benefit from mixed-method survey approaches that collect data from various demographic groups, including urban and rural regions, as well as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and humanities participants from public or private institutions, to reveal complex migration trends and defection patterns. Furthermore, researchers should conduct comparative case studies with Global South nations, including India's Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and Nigeria's Diaspora Commission, to learn about successful practices and contextual challenges, which can help Indonesia create better interventions based on external outcomes (Chaudhary et al., 2025; Olowolaju et al., 2025).

Overall, this research shows that governmental and scholars' or individuals' relationships become strained due to their shared lack of trust and insufficient commitment (refer to Figure 3). The government creates distrust through its failure to establish proper work settings for scholars; however, several academics chose not to remain in Indonesian workplaces because they discovered better opportunities beyond their current situation. They avoid pursuing career opportunities within their domestic country due to facility shortages and a non-supportive atmosphere, while the government does not implement strong policies to motivate scholars to stay. In fact, the efficiency policy and the attraction of living and working environment abroad become complex and dilemmatic situation amongst actors. Besides, the combination of underfunding and implementation issues, along with established nepotism practices, makes scholars believe that working with local institutions presents major potential risks and unpredictable outcomes. Furthermore, this research shows how defection equilibrium results from strategic decisions rather than an escape motive. Last but not least, the tense connection between the government and individuals is brought on by their mutual mistrust and lack of commitment. These factors become the cause of the complicated relationship between them.

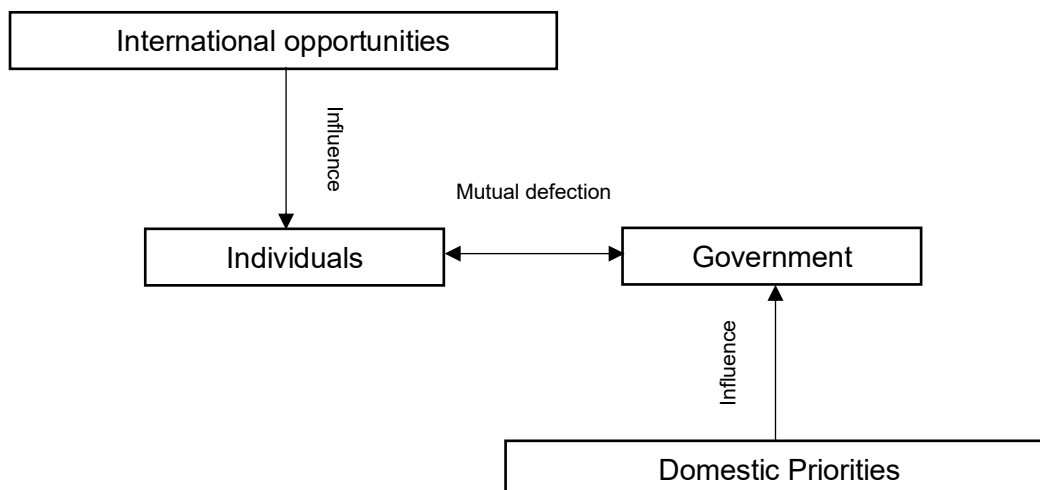


Figure 3. Stag Hunt Defection Equilibrium

Source: Author

CONCLUSION

The #KaburAjaDulu trend can be seen as an example of the Stag Hunt dilemma, where cooperation becomes increasingly difficult due to mutual distrust. Addressing this equilibrium requires transparent, enforceable, and sustained policy commitments that credibly elevate the cooperative payoff. Indonesia could begin to rebuild institutional trust by committing to long-term R&D funding, ensuring scholarship agreements are more binding, promoting fairer recruitment, and actively involving its diaspora communities. The country's ability to retain its talented professionals likely depends on whether it can show a clear and consistent commitment in return. Furthermore, it underlines the necessity for future research to adopt more nuanced methodologies that capture diverse experiences and trajectories. By integrating longitudinal studies and comparative case analyses, Indonesia can better inform its interventions and enhance its domestic innovation ecosystem. Hence, the author makes the case that the tense relationship between the government and people or academics is brought on by mistrust and inaction on both sides.

REFERENCE

- Alfajri, I., Wiyoga, P., Ato, S., Wewangi, M., & Febriane, S. (2024). Talenta Unggul Indonesia Tersedot ke Singapura (1). *Kompas.id*. <https://www.kompas.id/artikel/talenta-unggul-indonesia-tersedot-ke-singapura>
- Alkaf, A. M. (2025). #KaburAjaDulu: Beyond full stomachs, toward full lives. *Thejakartapost*. https://www.thejakartapost.com/opinion/2025/02/18/kaburajadulu-beyond-full-stomachs-toward-full-lives.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- Asmuni, Rohim, & Trihartono, A. (2020). Minimizing brain drain: How BumDes holds the best resources in the villages. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, 485(1), 012011. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/485/1/012011>
- Aspers, P., & Corte, U. (2019). What is Qualitative in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Sociology*, 42(2), 139–160. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-019-9413-7>
- Bhaskar, V., & Vega-Redondo, F. (2004). Migration and the evolution of conventions. *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, 55(3), 397–418. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jebo.2002.03.001>
- Bourdieu, P. (2018). The forms of capital. *The Sociology of Economic Life, Third Edition*, 78–92. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429494338>
- Chaudhary, A., Amaravayal, S., & Pandey, P. (2025). From brain drain to brain gain: catalyzing India's science & technology renaissance through scientific schemes and infrastructure growth. *Proceedings of the Indian National Science Academy*, 91(1), 68–81. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43538-024-00368-w>
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches* (3rd ed.).
- Docquier, F., & Rapoport, H. (2012). Globalization, brain drain, and development. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 50(3), 681–730. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jel.50.3.681>
- dos Santos Gomes, L. S. (2024). The impact of international health worker migration and recruitment on health systems in source countries: Stakeholder perspectives from Colombia, Indonesia, and Jordan. *International Journal of Health Planning and Management*, 39(3), 653–670. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hpm.3776>
- Hamli Syaifullah. (2024). Pembiayaan Riset dan masa depan Riset di Perguruan Tinggi. <https://Umj.Ac.Id/Opini/Pembiayaan-Riset-Dan-Masa-Depan-Riset-Di-Perguruan-Tinggi/>. <https://analisis.republika.co.id/berita/rwsrf6282/pembiayaan-ri-set-dan-masa-depan-ri-set-di-perguruan-tinggi-part2tinggi/#:~:text=Selain%20fasilitas%20tak%20kalah%20penting,tinggi%20tidak%20akan%20berkembang%20signifikan.>
- Huaxia. (2025). *Indonesia seeks to raise university research funding to 1 pct of GDP*. <https://english.news.cn/20250314/7fddd874d2b6419b832fcb455ea2d801/c.html>
- JÖns, H. (2009). "Brain circulation" and transnational knowledge networks: Studying long-term

- effects of academic mobility to Germany, 1954-2000. *Global Networks*, 9(3), 315–338. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-0374.2009.00256.x>
- Jöns, H., & Cranston, S. (2019). *Brain Drain*. International Encyclopedia of Human Geography, Second Edition. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-102295-5.10499-8>
- Julio Salas, H., Meiranti, M., Nur, H., & Azwar Renata, R. (2025). Dynamics of Government Crisis Communication in the Hashtag Phenomenon #KaburAjaDulu. *International Journal of Progressive Sciences and Technologies (IJPSAT)*, 49(2), 72–81. <https://ijpsat.org/>
- Kasih, A. P. (2023). 413 Awardee LPDP Enggan Pulang ke Indonesia, Sosiolog: Fenomena Brain Drain. *Kompas.Com*. <https://www.kompas.com/edu/read/2023/02/16/135759171/413-awardee-lpdp-enggan-pulang-ke-indonesia-sosiolog-fenomena-brain-drain>
- Kompas. (2025). *Kabur Aja Dulu: Dari Frustasi Jadi Strategi Ekonomi*. <https://money.kompas.com/read/2025/03/22/073440326/kabur-aja-dulu-dari-frustasi-jadi-strategi-ekonomi?page=all>
- Kusumaningrum, D. D., Afriansyah, A., & Muslim, F. (2025). *Tren #KaburAjaDulu: Peringatan bagi pemerintah sebelum kehilangan generasi berkualitas*. The Conversation. <https://theconversation.com/tren-kaburajadulu-peringatan-bagi-pemerintah-sebelum-kehilangan-generasi-berkualitas-250277#:~:text=Dalam beberapa hari terakhir%2C tagar,ekonomi-politik dan ketidakpastian hukum>
- Lees, N. (2022). Of Stag Hunts and secret societies: Cooperation, male coalitions and the origins of multiplicity. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 57(3), 367–383. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00108367221098493>
- Luft, J. A., Jeong, S., Idsardi, R., & Gardner, G. (2022). Literature Reviews, Theoretical Frameworks, and Conceptual Frameworks: An Introduction for New Biology Education Researchers. *CBE Life Sciences Education*, 21(3), rm33. <https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.21-05-0134>
- Marzuki, S., Buchori, D., & Alberts, B. (2024). Progress and promise for science in Indonesia. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 121(17). <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2402202121>
- Mashabi, Sania and Pratiwi, M. (2025). Apakah Penerima Beasiswa LPDP 2025 Wajib Pulang ke Indonesia? *Kompas.Com*. <https://www.kompas.com/edu/read/2025/01/18/101500071/apakah-penerima-beasiswa-lpdp-2025-wajib-pulang-ke-indonesia->
- Maspul, K. A. (2025). *#KaburAjaDulu — Escaping Reality or Redefining Success?* <https://Dikurniawanarif.Medium.Com/Kaburajadulu-Escaping-Reality-or-Redefining-Success-6E4a66111384>. <https://dikurniawanarif.medium.com/kaburajadulu-escaping-reality-or-redefining-success-6e4a66111384>
- Nurita, D. (2021). Program Kampus Merdeka Terbentur Keruwetan Birokrasi di Perguruan Tinggi. *Tempo.Co*, 1–1. <https://www.tempo.co/politik/program-kampus-merdeka-terbentur-keruwetan-birokrasi-di-perguruan-tinggi-457522>
- Nurmuhaemin, W. (2025). Kabur, Bercanda, dan Kelelahan Mental. *Detik*. <https://news.detik.com/kolom/d-7782558/kabur-bercanda-dan-kelelahan-mental>
- Olowolaju, O., Akpor, O., & Adeoluwa, O. (2025). Brain Drain in Nigerian Health Sector: An Unsung Epidemic. *RGUHS Journal of Nursing Sciences*, 15(1). https://doi.org/10.26463/rjns.15_1_16
- Praditya, I. I. (2025). Wamenaker soal #KaburAjaDulu: Silakan Pergi, Tidak Usah Kembali. *Liputan6*. <https://www.liputan6.com/bisnis/read/5925134/wamenaker-soal-kaburajadulu-silakan-pergi-tidak-usah-kembali>
- Putri, R. S. (2025). *Escaping Uncertainty: The Rising Trend of Indonesian Young Adults Moving Abroad*. *ModernDiplomacy.Eu*. <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2025/02/16/escaping-uncertainty-the-rising-trend-of-indonesian-young-adults-moving-abroad/>
- Putri Sari Margaret Julianty Silaban, Diya Mirza, Nida Nafilah, & Surya Zulfachrinal Tanjung. (2025). Menghadapi Ancaman Nasionalisme Disintegrasi Bangsa di Tengah Trend Kabur Aja Dulu. *Jurnal Bintang Pendidikan Indonesia*, 3(2), 193–199.

- <https://doi.org/10.55606/jubpi.v3i2.3821>
- Rahardyan, A. (2025). *Survei #KaburAjaDulu: Gen Z Paling Berminat, Jepang Tujuan Favorit Buat Buka Bisnis*. <https://lifestyle.bisnis.com/read/20250309/361/1859492/survei-kaburajadulu-gen-z-paling-berminat-jepang-tujuan-favorit-buat-buka-bisnis>
- Ritonga, M. W. (2025). *Viral Tagar Kabur Aja Dulu dan Kompetisi Tak Sehat di Dunia Politik*. Kompas.Id. <https://www.kompas.id/artikel/viral-tagar-kabur-aja-dulu-dan-kompetisi-tak-sehat-di-dunia-politik>.
- Rosalina, M. P., Judith J, M. P., & Krisna, A. (2025a). Bekerja Hampir 70 Jam Per Minggu, Dosen Tetap Masuk di Hari Libur. *Kompas.Id*. <https://www.kompas.id/artikel/bekerja-hampir-70-jam-per-minggu-dosen-tetap-masuk-di-hari-libur>
- Rosalina, M. P., Judith J, M. P., & Krisna, A. (2025b). Gaji Dosen Indonesia Kalah dari Negara Tetangga. *Kompas*. https://www.kompas.id/artikel/gaji-dosen-indonesia-kalah-dari-negara-tetangga?open_from=Baca_Juga_Card
- Sarjito, A. (2025). Strategi Menahan Brain Drain: Evaluasi Kebijakan Pemerintah dalam Menyediakan Peluang bagi Talenta Muda. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Humaniora*, 3(3), 399–424. <https://doi.org/10.57248/jishum.v3i3.563>
- Sidik A, B., & Intan, N. (2025). Efisiensi Anggaran Mengancam Hilangnya Mimpi "World Class University" di Perguruan Tinggi. *Kompas*. <https://doi.org/https://www.kompas.id/artikel/efisiensi-anggaran-mengancam-hilangnya-mimpi-world-class-university-di-perguruan-tinggi>
- Skyrms, B. (2003). The Stag Hunt and the evolution of social structure. *The Stag Hunt and the Evolution of Social Structure*, 1–149. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139165228>
- Sunardi, and Yunus, S. (2025). Pro-Kontra Tagar Kabur Aja Dulu, Nusron Wahid: Dia WNI atau Tidak, Kalau Kita Patriotik Sejati. *Tempo*. <https://www.tempo.co/politik/pro-kontra-tagar-kabur-aja-dulu-nusron-wahid-dia-wni-atau-tidak-kalau-kita-patriotik-sejati-1210155>
- Tampubolon, S. L., Hasugian, Pingky Monica, Purba, F. L. B., Pasaribu, Dyna M T, and, & Julia Ivana. (2025). #KaburAjaDulu Sebagai Bentuk Kekecewaan Anak Muda Terhadap Mahalnya Pendidikan Dan Minimnya Peluang Kerja Di Indonesia. *Jurnal Hukum Dan Kebijakan Publik*, 7, 112–120.
- Tehusjarana, K. M. (2025). #KaburAjaDulu and the urge to resist, in whatever form, from whatever place. The University of Melbourne. <https://indonesiaatmelbourne.unimelb.edu.au/kaburajadulu-and-the-urge-to-resist-in-whatever-form-from-whatever-place/#:~:text=This is in keeping with,dumpster fire that is Indonesia>
- Ubaidillah, M. (2025). *Kabur Aja Dulu, Sekadar Tren atau Memang Niat?* SWA. <https://swa.co.id/read/457293/kabur-aja-dulu-sekadar-tren-atau-memang-niat>
- UGM. (2023). *Indonesia Faces Rising Brain Drain as Skilled Workers Move Abroad*. <https://ugm.ac.id/en/news/indonesia-faces-rising-brain-drain-as-skilled-workers-move-abroad/>
- UGM. (2025a). Indonesia Faces Rising Brain Drain as Skilled Workers Move Abroad - Universitas Gadjah Mada. <https://Ugm.Ac.Id/En/News/Indonesia-Faces-Rising-Brain-Drain-As-Skilled-Workers-Move-Abroad/>. https://ugm.ac.id/en/news/indonesia-faces-rising-brain-drain-as-skilled-workers-move-abroad/?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- UGM. (2025b). UGM Expert: Viral Hashtag #KaburAjaDulu Reflects Youth's Critical View of Indonesia's Situation. *UGM University*. https://ugm.ac.id/en/news/ugm-expert-viral-hashtag-kaburajadulu-reflects-youths-critical-view-of-indonesias-situation/?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- UNESCO. (2020). Research and development expenditure (% of GDP) - Indonesia. *Worldbank*. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/GB.XPD.RSDV.GD.ZS?locations=ID>
- Utomo, A. J. (2011). Indonesian diaspora: Mapping the road to brain gain. *Strategic Review: The Indonesian Journal of Leadership, Policy and World Affairs*, 9–10. www.sr-indonesia.com/2011-08-09-22-09-10/commentaries/219-indonesian-diaspora-mapping-the-road-to-brain-gain
- Vega-Muñoz, A., González-Gómez-del-Miño, P., & Contreras-Barraza, N. (2024).

- Determinants of Brain Drain in 178 Countries from 2006 to 2022.*
<https://doi.org/10.20944/preprints202412.1034.v1>
- Walker, A.-M. (2025). *Inbound Insight: Indonesia*. GLS Global.
<https://gslglobal.com/2025/01/31/inbound-insight-indonesia/>
- Yuniar, R. W. (2025). Young Indonesians yearn to 'run away' overseas for work as frustration grows | South China Morning Post. *South China Morning Post* .
https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/economics/article/3298701/young-indonesians-yearn-run-away-overseas-work-frustration-grows?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- Zaennudin, M. (2025). Awal Mula Tren Tagar Kabur Aja Dulu Ramai Digunakan, Mengapa? *Kompas.Com*. <https://www.kompas.com/tren/read/2025/02/18/083000865/awal-mula-tren-tagar-kabur-aja-dulu-ramai-digunakan-mengapa-?page=all>