

INDONESIAN CULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN THE INDONESIA-THAILAND CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM 2023 EVENT

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

received: 13/06/2024

revised: 08/08/2024

accepted: 02/09/2024

Keywords:

Culture Diplomacy;
Indonesia-Thailand Culture Exchange Program; Cultural Promotion

DOI:

10.32509/mirshus.v4i2.81

ABSTRACT

Cultural diplomacy plays an important role in strengthening international relations and enhancing mutual understanding between countries. The Indonesian Embassy in Bangkok organizes the 2023 Indonesia-Thailand Cultural Exchange Program, an important initiative to promote Indonesian culture in Thailand. This research examines the impact and effectiveness of cultural diplomacy through this exchange program. The research employs qualitative methods, emphasizing content analysis, to gather and classify significant contexts. Primary data were collected through interviews resource persons at the Indonesia Embassy in Bangkok and participants of the 2023 Indonesia-Thailand Cultural Exchange Program, and also utilizes secondary data from Instagram @IndonesiainBangkok. The results of this research show that cultural diplomacy, facilitated by initiatives such as the Indonesia-Thailand Cultural Exchange Program, can contribute to improving bilateral relations and strengthening appreciation of cultural diversity. This research underlines the importance of cultural diplomacy in achieving diplomatic goals, fostering mutual understanding and strengthening people-to-people connections between Indonesia and Thailand.

INTRODUCTION

Since royal times, Indonesia and Thailand have had strong cultural ties and many similarities. This is influenced by several factors such as the influence of religion, which both countries were influenced by Hinduism and Buddhism in their history. This has resulted in common cultural elements, such as in art, architecture, and religious traditions. Through the relationship between the kingdoms in Indonesia including Majapahit and Sriwijaya Kingdoms, the relationship between Indonesia and Thailand has been

established for hundreds of years. Since the time of Sriwijaya and Majapahit Kingdoms. The relationship between Indonesia and Thailand has been established with a rich exchange of civilizations, the people of both nations have been closely connected with cultural arts, religions, architecture, and literary works. With the cultural diversity that Indonesia has with Thailand, it can be used as a tool for diplomacy to achieve the national interests needed by the country. There are many avenues and possibilities for better friendship and collaboration between these two countries that

can be pursued. The establishment of diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Thailand dates back to March 7, 1950. Since then, the two countries have developed strong ties in various fields, including trade, science and technology, economy, and culture. This relationship has been further strengthened by official visits between the leaders of the two countries, reflecting a strong commitment to enhance mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation (Kemenlu, 2021). Efforts to develop diplomacy at the international level have resulted in various types of diplomacy (Ramadhony & Firmansyah, 2022). This diplomacy effort is an effort that is widely used by many countries to establish cooperative relations at the international level. These efforts are used to achieve common national interests. Bos & Melissen (2019), explains that the purpose of public diplomacy is to have a positive impact on international public opinion in order to change perceptions of a country.

Based on the background above, it can be seen how Indonesia and Thailand have established good relations from various cooperation including cooperation in the socio-cultural field. Because Indonesia has a great desire to increase its cooperation in the socio-cultural field because Indonesia and Thailand are two major countries in the Southeast Asian region that play an important role (Ramadhony & Firmansyah, 2022). It can promote stability and prosperity the region and with the Cooperation can improve bilateral relations in various other fields and is considered a strategic step to strengthen partnerships and mutual support between the two countries.

One of the Indonesia-Thailand Cooperation in the socio-cultural field is the implementation of the Cultural Exchange Program. In order to facilitate the growth of people-to-people relations with Thailand, the Indonesian government runs a program through its embassy in Bangkok that has attracted the interest of academics. Therefore, as one of Indonesia's diplomatic instruments. This research aims to find the effectiveness of implementing Indonesian

culture diplomacy, this research will focus on the dissemination of Indonesian culture through the Indonesia-Thailand Cultural Exchange Program 2023.

PROBLEM FORMULATION

Based on the explanation above, the main problems of this research are formulated: "How is the implementation of Indonesia's cultural diplomacy through the Indonesia-Thailand Cultural Exchange Program 2023?"

SCOPE AND PROBLEM BOUNDARIES

In this study, researchers focused on the scope and limitations of the problem to understand more deeply the main research issues discussed. The author limits the scope of writing by analyzing only the Indonesia-Thailand Cultural Exchange Program 2023, focusing specifically on the diplomatic efforts made by the Indonesian Embassy in Bangkok through this program. Additionally, the author limits certain materials or topics, specifically discussing public diplomacy carried out through the Indonesia-Thailand Cultural Exchange Program 2023, which includes the promotion of Indonesian culture, cultural understanding, and the role of culture in international relations.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In analyzing Indonesia's cultural diplomacy efforts through the Indonesia-Thailand Cultural Exchange Program 2023 event, researchers use public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy as supporting concepts. This is because the program to strengthen Indonesia-Thailand Cooperation through the Indonesia-Thailand Cultural Exchange Program 2023 is only carried out for a short period of time so that this program emphasizes how the program affects public opinion.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Public diplomacy is an attempt to unify public opinion by state and non-state actors through the opening of communication,

the presentation of a positive self-image, and the introduction of foreign policy to the world order (Sevin, 2017). According to Gurgu & Cociuban (2016), public diplomacy is a multifaceted concept with three main objectives: (1) advancing the country's goals and policies; (2) being a channel for communicating values and attitudes; and (3) being a way to strengthen mutual trust between countries and societies. The key to achieving the goals of public diplomacy is to focus on messages that are accessible to everyone. This requires building an effective communication strategy, both in managing internal forces and in interacting with external parties. One of the government's communication strategies is to involve non-state groups, such as MNCs (Multinational Corporations) and NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations), to strengthen the message and goals of diplomacy. In addition, communication strategies must also pay attention to the target group of foreign publics, so that the messages conveyed can reach the desired target more effectively.

The use of public diplomacy is to gain a positive image from the international public. Nicholas Cull, in an article entitled "Public Diplomacy: Lessons From The Past" (2009), classifies the practice of public diplomacy into six main forms. These include Listening, Advocacy, Cultural Diplomacy, Exchange Diplomacy, and International Broadcasting. In the context of Cull's paper, Cultural Diplomacy refers to countries' efforts to protect their international existence by preserving their cultural heritage and prioritizing cultural attractiveness in the international system.

CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

Cultural diplomacy is a form of public diplomacy practice. The issue of culture as an instrument in conducting diplomacy has become a global phenomenon that increasingly attracts the attention of many countries. This phenomenon illustrates the use of cultural aspects as a means to achieve diplomatic goals, implement policies, and shape a country's attitude toward others

(Mulyaman, 2020). First, actors and government involvement play a key role, as cultural diplomacy is one of the diplomatic tactics used by governments to advance their foreign policy, often involving the foreign ministry directly or indirectly. Second, cultural diplomacy has several objectives, including fostering understanding between parties, opposing prejudice and ethnocentrism, and avoiding violence. Third, cultural diplomacy encompasses a wide range of activities, such as international scholarship offers, student exchanges, domestic and international art events, cultural group performances, seminars, conferences, and festivals. Culture has a strong absorptive power over the thought patterns and values held by its people. Thus, changes in the culture of a society can have a significant impact on how that country interacts with others (Mustafha & Abdul Razak, 2020). Finally, to preserve good relations, countries engaged in cultural diplomacy abroad also assist other countries' cultural diplomacy initiatives at home, such as offering venues for other countries' cultural communities to engage in cultural exchanges.

In this research, the Indonesia-Thailand Cultural Exchange Program 2023 event organized by the Indonesian Embassy in Bangkok has covered the 4 elements. Where in the program there are government and non-government actors such as the Indonesian Embassy in Bangkok as a government actor and several universities as non-government actors, the program also has a specific purpose to strengthen cooperation between the two countries, this program also has many cultural activities or activities as an effort to approach culture to Thailand and the last element, this program also has an audience that is quite interesting to support this event. Therefore, researchers here use the concept of cultural diplomacy which is part of the practice of public diplomacy as a supporting concept to find out how Indonesia's cultural diplomacy efforts through the Indonesia-Thailand Cultural Exchange Program 2023 event.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The many of countries that make efforts in public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy as concepts in diplomacy to promote the country's image through activities aimed at achieving national interests, has led researchers to conduct similar studies which will then be applied as a foundation in making a design of thought from the formulation of the problem to be studied. Several studies will be listed on this page as a guide and comparison of the research to be conducted by the author. There are five studies that will be used as the basis for this research.

The first research conducted by Danurtia & Setiawan (2023) entitled "The Effect of Japanese Cultural Diplomacy in Indonesia Through Japan Cultural Weeks 2023" this study analyzes Japanese cultural diplomacy to Indonesia through Japan Cultural Weeks. Japan Cultural Week (JCW) is a series of cultural introductions to Japan as a means of fostering cultural engagement between Indonesia and Japan. Researchers have noted that the recipient country's opinion of the influencing country affects how well a country conducts cultural diplomacy with other countries. In this case, Indonesia's perception of Japan as a partner country impacts the effectiveness of Japan's cultural diplomacy in the country.

The second research was conducted by Khatrunada & Alam (2019) with the research title "Indonesian Cultural Diplomacy through the 2018 International Gamelan Festival in Solo" this study examines Indonesia's cultural diplomacy with the 2018 International Gamelan Festival cultural event in Solo, where this activity was carried out by the Indonesian government as a tool in raising a good impression in the eyes of the world. The researcher concluded from his research findings that the 2018 International Gamelan Festival, which had a positive impact on Indonesia's reputation, was evidence of the effectiveness of diplomacy as a tool that the country was able to use to advance its goals. It shows the importance of culture and how, with proper

management, culture can benefit the nation.

The third research was conducted by Lamatenggo (2022) with the research title "South Korean Cultural Diplomacy through the Korean Cultural Center in the Hanbok Experience program". This research discusses cultural diplomacy conducted by South Korea through the Korean Cultural Center in the Hanbok Experience Program. Experts predict that cultural diplomacy will contribute to building a foundation of trust. Because the country will get long-term benefits from this mutual trust. The Hanbok Experience Program is one example of South Korean cultural diplomacy conducted in Indonesia. Because at this event, KCC Indonesia staff members can explain about Hanbok to interested Indonesians, try it on, take pictures together, teach them how to play traditional South Korean games, and engage in prize games.

The fourth research was conducted by Gabe et al. (2023) entitled; research "Indonesian Public Diplomacy through the Asian Games 2018" researchers analyzed how Indonesia's public diplomacy efforts through the Asian Games 2018 were carried out by the Indonesian government and INASGOC. The results of this study state that beyond what is expected by other countries, each player in the Indonesian government and non-governmental organizations are able to achieve public diplomacy goals in the near future through their respective tactics. These players in international relations made efforts that aligned with the three levels of public diplomacy and adequately addressed the substance of each level - namely cooperation, conversation, and monologue.

The fifth research was conducted by Erwindo (2018) entitled "The Effectiveness of Cultural Diplomacy in the Spread of Anime and Manga as Nation Branding Japan", explaining that the practice of cultural diplomacy is an effective way for Japan to restore the country's positive image again. Researchers also mentioned that the effectiveness of cultural diplomacy can be seen in two ways, namely, sustainable exports and understood values. These values are an

indicator for the people of the country of how the country's image through these cultural products (Erwido, 2018).

From some of these researchers, researchers use the concepts of public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy through activities that help promote Indonesia's cultural diversity. There are some similarities and differences in previous research. The similarity of previous researchers is that both use public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy as an effort to spread or influence their culture to a country. However, the difference from previous researchers is that this research focuses on research on concrete outputs and efforts made in cultural diplomacy from the program, outputs intended in researchers such as concrete achievements in promoting Indonesian culture in Thailand and vice versa, as well as the long-term implications of the program on bilateral relations between the two countries.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research applies a qualitative method with content analysis that focuses on collecting settings that are categorized and have the same meaning to create related models and create an inductive method for qualitative data analysis. According to

Sugiyono (2018: 456) Primary data is a data source that will be directly provided to data collectors. The data collection techniques used include interviews, document-based methods, and internet-based information collection. Researchers use descriptive analysis methods that apply data in the form of primary data such as interviews with sources at the Indonesian Embassy in Bangkok and several participants of the Indonesia-Thailand Cultural Exchange Program 2023. While the secondary data applied in this research is by collecting internet-based information through Instagram @IndonesiainBangkok.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Indonesia-Thailand Cultural Exchange Program 2023

Indonesia-Thailand Cultural Exchange Program 2023 is an activity organized by the Indonesian Embassy in Bangkok by strengthening cultural arts cooperation and strengthening people-to-people contact between the people of Indonesia and Thailand (Kemenlu, 2023). This activity is part of a larger activity, namely the Trade, Tourism, Investment and Cultural Forum (TTCIF). The Indonesia-Thailand Cultural Exchange Program 2023 was held for 2 days with the following detailed implementation schedule:

Table 1. Schedule of Implementation of the Indonesia-Thailand Cultural Exchange Program 2023 Activities

Activity Schedule	
Day 1	Thursday,14 September 2023
Day 2	Friday,15 September 2023

The first day of activities was held on September 14, 2023, this activity began with a workshop consisting of 40 students and lecturers from four universities from Indonesia namely Yogyakarta State University, Surabaya State University, Islamic University of Indonesia, and Brawijaya University. In this workshop, the participants learned Thai dances where the participants will be taught several Thai dances for 3-4 hours and then performed directly in front of the Attaché of Education and Culture of the Indonesian Embassy in Bangkok and the President of the Bunditpatanasilpa Institute. In this dance workshop, the participants were divided into four groups to learn traditional Thai dances. Each group was invited to learn intensively four typical Thai dances, namely Rabam Khrut Dance, Soeng Kapo Dance, Fon Tee Dance, and Raban Chaona Dance. In addition to learning Thai dances, the participants' next activity was to learn Thai culture at the Wat Arun Community Learning Center led by Mr. Hartanto, an Indonesian citizen who devotes himself to the children of underprivileged Thai people (Kemenlu, 2023). In this activity, the participants had the opportunity to directly understand the early childhood education approach applied in Thailand. This aims to strengthen ties between the two countries in the field of early childhood education (Buain & Pholpirul, 2022).

The second day of activities was held on September 15, 2023 at the sports hall of the Indonesian Embassy in Bangkok, this activity was attended by 166 students from 12 universities in Thailand. Four Indonesian dances were performed to the Thai students: Jathil Dance, which is one part of the Reog Ponorogo show, taught by instructors from Brawijaya University; Kuda-Kuda Dance from Yogyakarta State University; Indonesian Wonderland Dance from Universitas Islam Indonesia; and Suramadu Dance from Surabaya State University. Based on an interview with one of the event organizers, prior to the event, the Indonesian Embassy in Bangkok had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between universities

in Indonesia and universities in Thailand. The cooperation is in the form of cultural exchange and also cooperation in the field of education (Eneng, Primary Data Interview, April 29, 2024). In this statement, the efforts of the Indonesian Embassy in Bangkok in introducing the culture of the country through the Indonesia-Thailand Cultural Exchange Program 2023 event can strengthen cooperation between Indonesia and Thailand through education and culture and can increase understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity among students from both countries.

Implementation of the Indonesian Embassy in Bangkok Cultural Diplomacy in Organizing the Indonesia-Thailand Cultural Exchange Program 2023 Event

The role of government actors in a cultural diplomacy activity includes: Representing, Negotiating, Protecting, Promoting, Reporting, Managing. Leading from this statement, that the task of the Indonesian Embassy in Bangkok in organizing the Indonesia-Thailand Cultural Exchange Program 2023 is promoting. That is, promoting culture in Thailand. The efforts of the Indonesian Embassy in Bangkok in introducing Indonesian culture through this event are dance culture. According to a cultural diplomacy guidebook by Directorate of Heritage and Cultural Diplomacy, Directorate General of Culture (2018), the main purpose of cultural diplomacy is to influence public opinion especially the people of other countries to support a certain foreign policy. However, based on the results of an interview with one of the organizers of the event explained that before the holding of the Indonesia-Thailand Cultural Exchange Program 2023 event, the Indonesian Embassy in Bangkok also introduced other cultures. Such as learning the Indonesian language, basic knowledge of Indonesian geography, then the Indonesian Embassy in Bangkok also helps introduce in general terms related to Indonesia's relationship with Thailand, as well as serving Indonesian specialties as a

promotion of Indonesian cuisine (Eneng, Primary Data Interview, April 29, 2024). These efforts were introduced by the Indonesian Embassy in Bangkok during the preparation of the Indonesia-Thailand Cultural Exchange Program 2023 event as a tool for Indonesian Cultural diplomacy in Thailand.

The results of the Indonesia-Thailand Cultural Exchange Program 2023.

The application of cultural diplomacy can be seen through several indicators, in this case, researchers found through interviews and internet-based research through social media @IndonesiainBangkok, that this event produced positive things in both countries. One of them is a change in cultural perception and understanding, as it is known that Thai culture is almost similar to Indonesian culture. In this case it does not mean that one of the two countries has claimed one of its cultures. However, this is caused by several historical factors because Indonesia and Thailand are in the same region, namely Southeast Asia.

Based on the results of an interview with one of the organizers of the event, that the holding of the Indonesia-Thailand Cultural Exchange Program 2023 event has straightened out the perception of cultural similarities between Indonesia and Thailand, one of which is dance culture. How a similarity is not something that must be debated. However, it can be a bridge to understand each other's culture. Through this event, it can help them understand the differences in their typical dance movements, which may look similar to Thai dance. In addition, the similarity of traditional clothes with Malay traditional clothes, the similarity of angklung and other cultural similarities. The Indonesian Embassy in Bangkok as the main actor in organizing this program has indirectly provided an understanding of the cultural similarities between Indonesia and Thailand. Not only that, but the Indonesian Embassy in Bangkok also provides an understanding that with these similarities, relations between Indonesia and Thailand

must be maintained to be developed in the future. As well as providing an understanding of history to the two citizens so that future generations do not only understand the history of Indonesia-Thailand relations today. But the historical relationship has always been there. In addition, the findings obtained by researchers based on Instagram video reels @IndonesiainBangkok uploaded last September 2023, that Thai students who participated in the program gained new knowledge from Indonesian culture. They were also very impressed during the training and felt honored to be involved in this KBRI event. The video shows the positive response from both Thai and Indonesian participants.

It can be concluded that the holding of this program can maintain good relations between Indonesia and Thailand and get a good perception from Thai citizens towards Indonesian culture.

CONCLUSION

Indonesia's cultural diplomacy and Indonesia's national interests towards Thailand through the Indonesia-Thailand Cultural Exchange Program 2023 is a form of soft power that aims to strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries. In addition to strengthening relations through cultural diplomacy, another goal is to introduce Indonesian culture to Thai people who are interested in learning about Indonesian culture and to correct misperceptions. To realize this goal, a people-to-people event was organized in Thailand and the Indonesian Embassy in Bangkok served as a platform to introduce Indonesian culture to the Thai people. This event not only introduced the culture, but also various Indonesian specialties ranging from snacks to heavy meals, as well as providing an introduction and lesson of Indonesian language to the Thai people.

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