

ABSTRAK

Latar belakang penelitian ini didasari oleh krisis demografi dan penuaan populasi di Jepang yang mendesak kebutuhan akan sumber daya manusia asing, di mana Indonesia menjadi mitra strategis dengan pola konversi "pelajar-menjadi-pekerja" yang tinggi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan kerangka konsep Diplomasi Publik dari *Mark Leonard* yang terdiri dari tiga dimensi: *News Management*, *Strategic Communication*, dan *Relationship Building*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa The Japan Foundation menerapkan strategi terintegrasi untuk menghadapi fluktuasi minat pelajar, terutama akibat dampak pandemi COVID-19. Pertama, melalui *News Management*, The Japan Foundation mengelola informasi secara reaktif terkait kebijakan pembatasan perjalanan untuk menjaga kepastian narasi pendidikan. Kedua, dalam *Strategic Communication*, The Japan Foundation memanfaatkan digitalisasi dan media sosial serta penyelenggaraan budaya seperti *Japanese Film Festival (JFF)* secara hibrida untuk mempertahankan citra positif Jepang. Ketiga, melalui *Relationship Building*, The Japan Foundation memperkuat hubungan jangka panjang melalui standarisasi pengajaran bahasa (*Irodori*), pemberian beasiswa, serta kemitraan antar-lembaga dengan universitas dan lembaga riset (BRIN) di Indonesia. Kesimpulannya, sinergi dari ketiga strategi ini berhasil memicu pemulihan (*rebound*) jumlah pelajar Indonesia yang signifikan pada tahun 2023, mendukung agenda nasional Jepang dalam mengamankan ketersediaan sumber daya manusia terampil melalui jalur pendidikan.

Kata Kunci: Diplomasi Publik, The Japan Foundation, Pertukaran Pelajar, Soft Power, Hubungan Indonesia-Jepang.

ABSTRACT

The background of this study is grounded in Japan's demographic crisis and aging population, which necessitates foreign human resources, positioning Indonesia as a strategic partner with a high "*student-to-worker*" conversion pattern. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method utilizing Mark Leonard's Public Diplomacy framework, which consists of three dimensions: *News Management*, *Strategic Communication*, and *Relationship Building*. The results indicate that The Japan Foundation applied an integrated strategy to address fluctuations in student interest, particularly due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. First, through *News Management*, The Japan Foundation managed information reactively regarding travel restrictions to maintain certainty in the educational narrative. Second, in *Strategic Communication*, The Japan Foundation utilized digitalization, social media, and *hybrid* cultural events like the *Japanese Film Festival (JFF)* to sustain Japan's positive image. Third, through *Relationship Building*, The Japan Foundation strengthened long-term relationships via the standardization of language teaching (*Irodori*), scholarship provision, and institutional partnerships with universities and research agencies (BRIN) in Indonesia. In conclusion, the synergy of these three strategies successfully triggered a significant *rebound* in the number of Indonesian students in 2023, supporting Japan's national agenda in securing a supply of skilled labor through educational channels.

Keywords: Public Diplomacy, The Japan Foundation, Student Exchange, Soft Power, Indonesia-Japan Relations.