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Social Remittances of Indonesian Diaspora Entrepreneurship: Cultural Adaptation and Local Business Partnership in Malaysia and Saudi Arabia

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A B S T R A C T
This study looks into the production of social remittance within the activities of Indonesian entrepreneurs in Malaysia and Saudi Arabia. It uses an exploratory comparative case study to examine how two culinary entrepreneurs engage with local citizens and traverse legal, market, supplier, and cultural challenges as they seek to build food businesses. Applying an exploratory comparative case study, it examines how two culinary entrepreneurs negotiate the legal, market, supplier and cultural contexts of building food businesses in collaboration with local citizens. In-depth interviews provided data which were analysed thematically using NVivo with node development, word cloud visualization and cross case comparison. The results indicate that social remittances come about in culturally connected business arrangements. They can be found in Malaysia in legal adaptation, local brand positioning, business standardization and entrepreneurial knowledge sharing. They have appeared in Saudi Arabia in hybridisation of culinary styles between Indonesia and Arabia, the mediation of communication, negotiation of trust, and adaption of services.

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INTRODUCTION

Social remittances are the movement of ideas, behaviours, identities, values, practices and social capital through migrant transnational spaces (Levitt, 1998; Vershinina & Cruz, 2020). While financial remittances focus on non-economic transfers that result from migrants' interactions with families, communities, organizations, and business networks, they emphasize the latter (Ughulu, 2024; Vershinina & Cruz, 2020). Social remittances are especially salient in the case of diaspora entrepreneurship because the entrepreneurs don't only transfer capital across borders but they also transfer business knowledge, cultural meanings, business practices, and social networks. Diaspora entrepreneurs are in homeland and host country settings. They have access to social capital, cultural knowledge, international networks, and access to markets that is different from just local entrepreneurs (Chen et al., 2024; Sternberg, Amorós, et al., 2023). The context of their activities is also defined by their multiple identities as migrant, cultural, social, personal and business identities (Elo et al., 2022). Diaspora entrepreneurship can have a positive impact on maintaining diaspora identity and can be influenced by changing diaspora resources and opportunity configurations, as Syrett and Keles (Syrett & Keles, 2022) have noted. So diaspora entrepreneurship is not just an economic activity but a process of ongoing negotiation of identity, networks and trans-border practices.

This process is greatly influenced by cultural differences. Diaspora entrepreneurs often encounter a variety of differences in their communication style, business norms, consumer preference, trust building and institutional expectations (Ughulu, 2024). Cultural knowledge and proficiency in both language and cultural sensitivity to local practices are therefore needed for adapting to the business environment in the host country (Sinkovics & Reuber, 2021). Meanwhile, cultural difference can be an entrepreneurial asset. Diaspora entrepreneurs can bring together both home and host country markets due to their ability to understand multiple cultural contexts, tastes, norms and regulations (Sternberg, Amorós, et al., 2023). This bridging function is facilitated through bonding, bridging and linking forms of social capital that link the entrepreneurs with the diaspora communities, local partners, suppliers, consumers, and host country's institutions (Mombeuil et al., 2021; Syrett & Keles, 2022).

Social remittances, diaspora entrepreneurship, cultural adaptation and social capital have been discussed in literature but there are gaps. First, social remittances are still more frequently explored through the lens of the family, the community, return migration or migrant organizations than through what the migrants actually do in their daily business activities. Second, while diaspora entrepreneurship research has focused on networks and opportunity structures, there has been limited attention to the local business partnerships as a source of social remittances. Third, micro-level comparative studies of the ways diaspora entrepreneurs forgo or negotiate the legitimacy, trust, and culinary identity, supplier relationships, and expectations for service in various host-country settings are still scarce. This article aims to fill these gaps by examining the culinary entrepreneurs of the Indonesian people in Malaysia and Saudi Arabia. The empirical site chosen, namely the culinary sector, is relevant, as business practice, cultural representation, taste adaptation, service norms and identity negotiation are combined in this sector. According to the Malaysia case, the local partnership, legal adaptation, brand positioning, network of suppliers, business standardization, and sharing of knowledge all contribute to shaping entrepreneurship. For the Saudi Arabia case, the entrepreneurship is molded by the local partnership, culinary hybridization between Indonesians and Arabs, mediated communication, trust negotiation, service adaptation, and involvement in the market related to umrah.

The aim of this article is to explore the mechanisms of creating social remittances in the business activities of the Indonesian expatriates in two different host countries. The question of the article is how Indonesian business partners are established locally in Malaysia and Saudi Arabia? In what ways do their cultural differences influence how they do business and adapt to it? What social remittances are created in their entrepreneurship experiences? The article proposes that diaspora entrepreneurship is a space for negotiating social remittance production, where knowledge about business, cultural identity, ethical values, adaptive practices and social capital are produced and negotiated across borders.

This article is a contribution to the literature in three ways. First, it takes the concept of social remittances one step further by placing it in the context of diaspora entrepreneurship and cross-cultural business activities. Secondly, it provides a micro-level comparison of the Indonesian culinary entrepreneurs in Malaysia and Saudi Arabia. Third, it illustrates the possible contribution of a small-N exploratory comparative study combined with NVivo-aided thematic analysis to provide contextually rich understanding of local partnership, cultural adaptations and transnational business practice.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The four related concepts on which this study is based, are social remittances, diaspora entrepreneurship, cultural adaptation and social capital. This analysis is grounded in the ideas that can explain the production of non-financial transfers by Indonesian culinary entrepreneurs in Malaysia and Saudi Arabia by means of local partnerships and cross-border business practices. Social remittances are the flow of ideas, behaviours, identities, values, practices, and social capital in migrant transnational spaces (Levitt, 1998; Vershinina & Cruz, 2020). Social remittances are transmitted between people and institutions through interpersonal and organizational relations, such as migrant and business networks, families, and communities (Ughulu, 2024; Vershinina & Cruz, 2020). Vershinina and Cruz identify three key aspects of social remittances: normative structures, systems of practice, and social capital (Vershinina & Cruz, 2020). This framework is applicable for the study of diaspora entrepreneurship as this also involves the transference of not only capital, but also legal knowledge, work ethic, culture, business practices, and relational resources. Möllers et al. also divide remittances into tangible (e.g., money and tools) and intangible (e.g., work ethics, business ideas, social norms) (Möllers et al., 2025). Likewise, Minto-Coy (Minto-Coy, 2023) states that Diaspora contributions involve knowledge, expertise, competence and networks.

Diaspora entrepreneurship is the study of the actions and practices of migrant/diaspora actors in both host and homeland countries. Individuals who are diaspora entrepreneurs leverage resources from abroad, including, but not limited to, social capital, cultural capital, transnational social capital, access to the market, or overseas contacts (Chen et al., 2024; Sternberg, Levie, et al., 2023). As stated by Elo et al. (2022), diasporic transnational entrepreneurs can have multiple identities that are influenced by economic, cultural, social, language and personal interests. Additionally, Syrett and Keles suggest that entrepreneurial activity may help to maintain the diaspora identity, and that enterprise is influenced by diaspora opportunities and resources (Syrett & Keles, 2022). This relationship is particularly noticeable in culinary entrepreneurship, as food businesses are an expression of cultural representation, taste adaptation and identity negotiation.

Cultural adaptation is crucial to diaspora business. Differences in communication style, consumer preference, service expectations, trust formation, supplier relationship and institutional procedures are among the challenges that diaspora entrepreneurs encounter (Ughulu, 2024). Sinkovics and Reuber stress the importance of language and culture for migrant entrepreneurs to fit into host country business contexts (Sinkovics & Reuber, 2021). But the problem of cultural difference is not merely limiting. Diaspora entrepreneurs have the potential to overcome cultural and regulatory distance by having an insider's grasp of both the norms, tastes, markets, and regulations of their home countries and those of their host countries (Sternberg, Amorós, et al., 2023). Similarly, Panibratov and Rysakova (Panibratov & Rysakova, 2020) demonstrate that tacit knowledge of language, customs and markets can serve as an entrepreneurial resource. As stated by Nyakabawu (Nyakabawu, 2023), the habitus influences entrepreneurial decisions, such as culinary preferences, work backgrounds, and cultural experience.

In what ways do diaspora entrepreneurs gain access to resources and legitimacy? Social capital and embeddedness are the tools used to answer this question. The authors Syrett and Keles (Syrett & Keles, 2022) describe three types of social capital: bonding, bridging, and linking. Bonding social capital is defined as the type of social capital that exists among family, friends, ethnic or diaspora groups. Bridging social capital relates to the entrepreneur linking with the local partners, suppliers, consumers, and non-diaspora actors. Social capital is a link between entrepreneurs and formal institutions, regulations, and authority structures. The presence of trusted relationships in transnational diaspora entrepreneurship can lower transaction costs, as suggested by Mombeuil et al. (Mombeuil et al., 2021). The importance of social and cultural dimensions in the entrepreneurial ecosystem is also pointed out by Fuller-Love and Akiode (Fuller-Love & Akiode, 2020), and transnational entrepreneurs have institutional relationships in both countries by Bolzani et al. (Bolzani et al., 2020).

Qualitative and/or case-based methods have been widely adopted in previous research on social remittances and diaspora entrepreneurship due to their ability to engage with the complexity of migrants' experiences, trans-border social networks, cultural embedding and diasporic entrepreneurial identity. Vershinina and Cruz (Vershinina & Cruz, 2020) highlight the importance of practice-based and ethnographic studies to uncover the social context of migrant entrepreneurship; meanwhile, Chen et al. (Chen et al., 2024) point out that the vast majority of studies on the diaspora entrepreneurship phenomenon are still case studies-based. What is also noted by Sinkovics and Reuber (Sinkovics & Reuber, 2021) is the need to be sensitive to multiple languages and cultures in conducting rich qualitative research on migrant entrepreneurship. These methodological tendencies lend themselves to this article's use of an exploratory qualitative comparative case study for several reasons: it examines meanings in context, local partnerships, and cross-cultural business practices, instead of statistical generalization.

Although the above contributions, there are still a few gaps in the literature. First, social remittances are often talked about with reference to families, communities, return migration, and migrant organizations; and their product, everyday entrepreneurial practices, are less developed. Secondly, diaspora entrepreneurship studies have overlooked how community entrepreneurship partnerships can be used to generate social remittances, while focusing more on identity, networks and opportunity structures. Third, while there are studies that address the issue of cultural adaptation in migrant entrepreneurship, there is a limited research attention to the comparison of the legal status, trust, culinary identity, supplier relations and service expectations at the micro-level between different host-country contexts.

The article thus conceptualizes the diaspora entrepreneurship as a space of social remittance production, drawing inspiration from these gaps. Social remittances are not viewed only as concepts that migrants bring back to their countries of origin, but as knowledge, practices, identities, values and social capital developed in the context of the host countries where migrants may be working. The local partnership, legal adaptation, brand positioning, supplier networks, business standardization and entrepreneurial knowledge sharing are important mechanisms of social remittance production in the Malaysia case. In the Saudi Arabia case, however, the hybridization of Indonesian cuisine with Arabic cuisine, the role of mediated communication, the negotiation of trust, the adaptation of the service, access to suppliers and the market for umrah are similar functions in a different cultural and institutional context. Indonesians are thus recognized as economic actors, as well as cultural intermediaries who are engaged in cross-border negotiations of identities, adjust their business models, and create transferable social knowledge.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a qualitative methodology using an exploratory comparative case study method. A comparative case study method was chosen by the researcher for this study, since the researcher's goal was to examine how social remittances are created through diaspora entrepreneurial activities in two distinct host countries (Malaysia and Saudi Arabia). The researcher is not seeking statistical generalizability; however, he/she will provide a contextual and descriptive comparative analysis of two Indonesian diaspora chefs. The term "population" refers to those individuals classified as Indonesian diaspora entrepreneurs operating culinary enterprises overseas. Participants were purposefully selected based upon three criteria: they are Indonesian diaspora business persons; they operate a culinary enterprise in their respective host countries; and they work with local residents in conducting business related to legal compliance issues, obtaining market entry opportunities, establishing relationships with suppliers or other operational requirements. Two participants were identified for inclusion into this study. They include IMY-01; an Indonesian diaspora chef running a culinary operation in Malaysia and ISA-01; an Indonesian diaspora chef running a culinary operation in Saudi Arabia.

The data collection instrument consisted of in-depth interviews with the participants which focused on such topics as: establishment of their respective culinary businesses; collaboration with local partners; adapting cultural preferences to meet customer expectations; complying with applicable laws; building relationships with suppliers; expectations of customers; negotiating identity with customers; developing trust with customers; and producing various types of social remittances. Transcripts from the in-depth interviews were analyzed utilizing NVivo. Analysis included multiple readings of transcripts, initial coding, developing nodes, categorizing codes, theme development, creating word cloud images and comparing both cases. Word clouds were developed only as preliminary visual aids to assist in identifying common lexical elements in each participant's transcript; whereas the primary interpretation of results was derived from thematically coded data, reference points to relevant coding statements, excerpts from the in-depth interviews, and comparisons between both cases.

In order to enhance trustworthiness, the study implemented credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability strategies. The credibility of the study was bolstered by meticulous examination of interview transcripts and concordance between codes, themes, and participant statements. The transferability of the findings was facilitated by the provision of contextual descriptions for each case. The concept of dependability was addressed by meticulously documenting the coding and analytical procedures in NVivo. Confirmability was maintained by grounding the interpretation in coded data, node structures, and selected interview evidence.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The analysis was conducted through several stages: transcript organization, initial coding, node development, word cloud visualization, coding relationship mapping, and cross-case thematic comparison. NVivo was used to assist the organization of codes and the visualization of relationships between the two interview sources. The analysis generated five major themes: local partnership and legality, cultural adaptation in business practice, culinary identity negotiation, trust and communication, and social remittance production.

This process was completed in multiple steps including: ordering of the transcriptions, initial coding, creating nodes, word cloud graphing, relationship coding and cross-case theme identification. NVivo was used to aid the ordering of codes and the identification of relationships between the two interviews. Five themes were produced through this process, including local partnership and legality, cultural adaptation in business practice, negotiation of food identity, trust and communication, and production of social remittance.

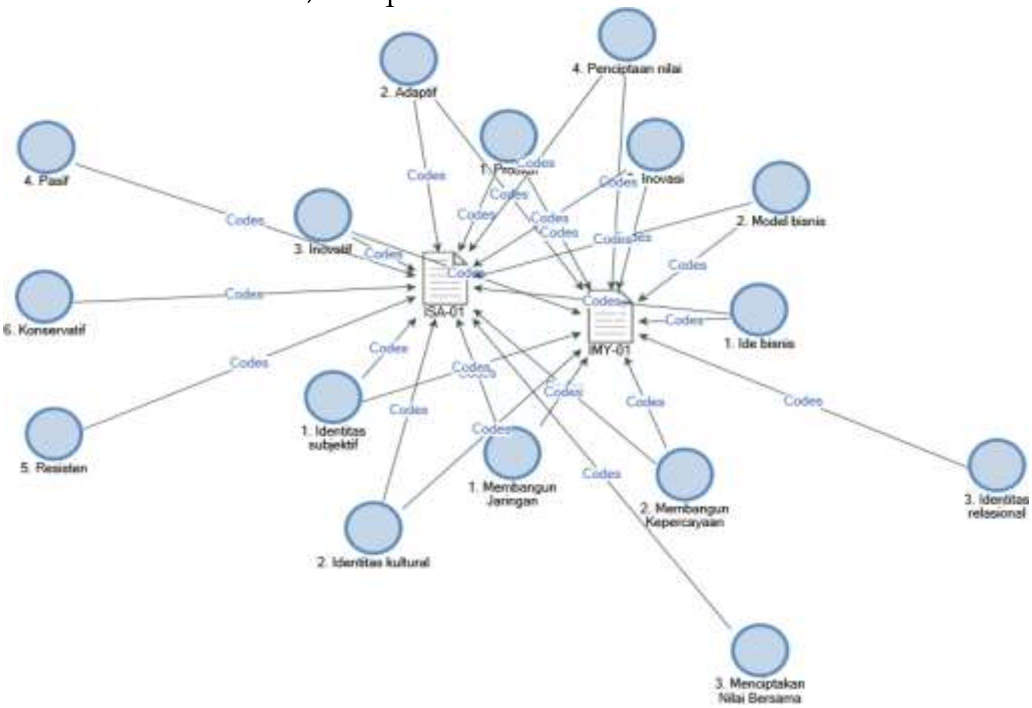

Figure 1. NVivo Coding Relationship Visualization between IMY-01 and ISA-01

Figure 1, the coding relationship visualization of the two interviews (IMY-01 refers to the Malaysia case and ISA-01 refers to the Saudi Arabia case), reveals the connection between the two cases to the same common themes (entrepreneurial ideas, business models, innovation, value creation, adaptive behavior, cultural identity, relational identity, network building, trust building and the creation of shared value). Both cases could be explored within the same framework, despite variations in cultural context, institutional environments, and markets.

The coding relationship visualization was not a finding in itself, but an analytical tool used to analyze the coded interview text, patterns of word clouds and inter-case thematic comparison. The relationship between the two cases through the common nodes indicates that entrepreneurs went through the same broad, generic process of diaspora entrepreneurship but with different content and interpretations due to different host country environments.

Figure 2. Word Cloud of ISA-01: Saudi Arabia Case

The word cloud of ISA-01 shows dominant terms such as "business," "Indonesia," "Arab," "culture," "communication," "identity," "relation," "partner," "supplier," "catering," "umrah," and "travel." These terms indicate that the Saudi Arabia case is strongly associated with cross-cultural business negotiation, local partnership, supplier access, trust formation, and the religious market surrounding umrah. The prominence of "Arab," "umrah," "catering," and "travel" reflects the specific position of the business within the religious mobility economy in Saudi Arabia.


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Figure 3. Word Cloud of IMY-01: Malaysia Case

The word cloud of IMY-01 shows dominant terms such as "business," "social," "culture," "communication," "Indonesia," "Malaysia," "local," "relation," "identity," "network," "brand," "branch," "legal," and "supplier."

These terms indicate that the Malaysia case is closely linked to local brand formation, legal adaptation, supplier networks, consumer acceptance, and business expansion. The presence of terms such as “brand,” “branch,” “legal,” and “supplier” reflects the more organizationally structured and expansion-oriented character of the Malaysia case.

The word clouds were used as exploratory visualizations. They helped identify lexical patterns in each transcript, but the interpretation of findings was based primarily on thematic coding, node development, coding references, and interview excerpts.

Table 1. Cross-Case Thematic Summary of IMY-01 and ISA-01

Theme	**IMY-01: Malaysia Case**	**ISA-01: Saudi Arabia Case**	**Analytical Meaning**
Local partnership and legality	Local partnership supports business legality, local acceptance, supplier access, and brand positioning in Malaysia.	Local partnership provides access to legality, suppliers, digital banking, market entry, and local business knowledge in Saudi Arabia.	Local partners function as bridging and linking social capital in both cases.
Cultural adaptation	Adaptation is reflected in compliance with local regulation, consumer review culture, service standards, cleanliness, and local brand framing.	Adaptation is reflected in language, behaviour, service expectations, supplier negotiation, and mediated communication.	Cultural adaptation differs according to host-country business norms and institutional settings.
Culinary identity negotiation	Indonesian culinary identity is maintained through food authenticity, but the brand is positioned as a local Malaysian brand.	Indonesian culinary identity is combined with Arab taste preferences through culinary hybridization.	Culinary business becomes a space where Indonesian identity is translated into local market logic.
Trust and communication	Trust is built through shared vision, internal transparency, local suppliers, and organizational structure.	Trust is built through partner mediation, gradual understanding, representatives, and informal support networks.	Trust is not automatic; it is continuously negotiated through communication and role adjustment.

Theme	IMY-01: Malaysia Case	ISA-01: Saudi Arabia Case	Analytical Meaning
Social remittance production	Social remittances appear through business standardization, R&D, entrepreneurship education, CSR, and knowledge sharing.	Social remittances appear through business knowledge transfer, trust negotiation, service adaptation, and engagement with the umrah market.	Social remittances are produced through everyday business practices in culturally embedded contexts.

The first major finding centers on local partnership and legality. In both cases, it's central to starting and running a business. In Malaysia, it backs legal standing and helps the business gain acceptance in the local market. In Saudi Arabia, the local partner plays a bigger role, providing access to legal processes, suppliers, market entry, and digital banking. So it's not just administrative; it's a way to enter and navigate the host-country business ecosystem.

The second finding is about cultural adaptation. In Malaysia, adaptation ties into formal regulation, consumer service expectations, cleanliness, hospitality, Google review culture, and positioning the brand as Malaysian while keeping Indonesian culinary roots. In Saudi Arabia, adaptation links more to language, behaviour, service expectations, supplier negotiation, and needing mediated communication with local actors. These differences show that cultural adaptation depends on context and can't be generalized across host countries.

The third finding concerns culinary identity negotiation. In Malaysia, Indonesian culinary identity is kept through authentic taste and food preparation, while the business frames itself as a Malaysian brand. In Saudi Arabia, Indonesian culinary identity adapts by blending with Arab tastes and service expectations. So it's neither fully preserved nor fully replaced; it's negotiated according to local market conditions.

Fourth finding: trust and communication. In Malaysia, trust gets built through shared background, internal transparency, organizational structure, supplier relations, and a collective vision among business actors. But in Saudi Arabia, trust leans more on personal relations, a local partner, a communication intermediary, and representatives placed inside the business. The point? Trust in diaspora entrepreneurship is relational, you have to actively construct it through communication, role clarification, and gradual adjustment.

Fifth finding: social remittances production. In Malaysia, they're visible in business standardization, R&D, local brand positioning, entrepreneurship education, CSR, and knowledge sharing with students or community groups. Saudi Arabia? Different story: transfer of Indonesian business experience, adaptation to Arab business culture, trust negotiation, service adjustment, culinary hybridization, and engagement with the umrah-related market. Across both, social remittances get produced not just through migration experience but through business practices, partnerships, and cross-cultural learning.

DISCUSSION

The findings position Indonesian diaspora entrepreneurship, in both Malaysia and Saudi Arabia, as a site where social remittances get produced. These aren't just ideas or values sent from migrants to their home communities. They're produced through business practices, local partnerships, identity negotiation, cultural adaptation, and social capital formation. That's consistent with Levitt (1998) and Vershinina & Cruz (2020): social remittances as circulation of ideas, behaviours, identities, practices, and social capital across transnational spaces. In both cases, social remittances emerge through entrepreneurial processes, not through financial transfer alone.

The Malaysia case illustrates how social remittances are produced through organizational development, local brand positioning, legal adaptation, supplier networks, and knowledge sharing. The entrepreneur's experience shows how a business that emerged from a diaspora student environment developed into a structured culinary enterprise with standardized practices, local suppliers, brand differentiation, and educational contribution. This finding is consistent with Minto-Coy's (Minto-Coy, 2023) argument that diaspora contributions include expertise, competence, knowledge, and networks, not only financial capital. It also reflects Möllers et al.'s (Möllers et al., 2025) distinction between tangible and intangible remittances, especially where business ideas, work ethics, and social norms become resources for entrepreneurial development.

The case of Saudi Arabia reveals a different way of producing social remittances. In this case, entrepreneurship is influenced through religious mobility, local partnership, mediated communication, supplier negotiation, trust recalibration, and engagement with the umrah-related market among others. The business is not simply selling Indonesian food; it is also transforming Indonesian culinary identity into a Saudi Arabian market influenced by Arab taste, service expectations, language, and religious tourism. This piece of evidence lend support to the idea that diaspora entrepreneurs may convert cultural and regulatory distances into entrepreneurial advantages since they are capable of understanding more than one culture and market environment (Sternberg, Levie, et al., 2023). Besides, it also resonates with Panibratov and Rysakova's perspective that intimate knowledge of language, customs, markets, and culture might be converted into a valuable tool in entrepreneurship (Panibratov & Rysakova, 2020).

Working with local partners is a very significant factor in both the cases. In Malaysia, the partner is the one helping the company find its legality and be accepted by locals. However, in Saudi Arabia the local partner is a source of supplier relationships, legal pathways, digital banking, and entry into the local market. Such findings stress the role of social capital in diaspora entrepreneurship. Syrett and Keles (Syrett & Keles, 2022) differentiate between bonding, bridging, and linking social capitals, and this distinction, too, is evident in both cases. Bonding social capital manifests itself in friendship, religious background, family, and Indonesian networks. Bridging social capital is represented by local partners, suppliers, consumers, and workers. Linking social capital is related to access to regulations, legal processes, institutional procedures, and local business systems. Besides, the cases echo Mombeuil et al.'s (Mombeuil et al., 2021) point that trusted transnational relationships have the potential to lower the degree of uncertainty and transaction costs.

The findings reveal that cultural adaptation is not a standard process. In Malaysia, adaptation correlates with consumer review culture, hospitality, cleanliness, local branding, and regulatory compliance. In Saudi Arabia, adaptation is a reflection of language, behaviour, mediated communication, supplier relations, service expectations, and negotiation of interpersonal boundaries more than anything else. These findings augment Ughulu's (Ughulu, 2024) contention that diaspora entrepreneurs encounter not only cultural differences but also differences in business practices, communication styles, and social norms. At the same time, they confirm Sinkovics and Reuber's (Sinkovics & Reuber, 2021) assertion that migrant entrepreneurship entails a conscious awareness of language, cultural understanding, and host-country business environments.

Culinary identity presents a second major issue. In both situations, Indonesian food serves as a vehicle of cultural expression; however, it is carried out in contrasting ways. On the one hand, in Malaysia, the Indonesian culinary identity is held to be mainly through flavor and authenticity of food, whereas the brand is marketed as local. On the other hand, in Saudi Arabia, the Indonesian culinary identity is inflected by Arab taste and service norms. This suggests that culinary entrepreneurship is a forum for identity negotiation. Elo et al. (Elo et al., 2022) maintain that diasporic transnational entrepreneurs may possess two or more formal, cultural, and social identities. The discoveries back this perspective by revealing that diaspora entrepreneurs do not simply reproduce Indonesian identity abroad; they adapt it, translate it, and strategically reposition it within host-country markets.

The Saudi Arabia example clearly shows trust negotiation as the main element. The use of mediators, slow communication, clear definition of roles, and representatives placing, all confirms that trust is not feeling alone, but a work condition that also results in uninterrupted delivery of business. In the Malaysian example, the trust is established after sharing a vision, mutual disclosure, setting up an organizational structure, and having a shared past. These differences indicate that trust has its roots in culture, i.e., it is culturally based. It is the result of very specific social, legal, institutional, and communication arrangements in each host country. This is also in line with Fuller-Love and Akiode's (Fuller-Love & Akiode, 2020) opinion that entrepreneurship is grounded in social and cultural ecosystems, and not only a response to market opportunity.

In summary, the analysis reveals that social remittances in the domain of diaspora entrepreneurship come about through five interrelated pathways: local partnership, cultural adaptation, culinary identity negotiation, trust-building, and knowledge transfer. These pathways are present in both scenarios, but the way they play out is different. Among other things, the Malaysian mode is marked by business standardization, local brand positioning, legal adaptation, supplier networks, and entrepreneurship education. The Saudi Arabia case, however, leans toward culinary hybridization, mediated communication, trust negotiation, supplier access, and religious-market engagement. This dissimilarity further backs up the claim that social remittances are produced in context rather than transmitted universally.

From a theoretical point of view, this research extends social remittance literature by highlighting that entrepreneurship is a significant medium through which non-financial remittances are created. It also makes a contribution to the diaspora entrepreneurship field by revealing how local partnerships and cultural adaptation influence transnational business practices. On an empirical level, this research delivers a micro-level comparison of Indonesian diaspora culinary entrepreneurs in Malaysia and Saudi Arabia. It also reveals that a small-N exploratory comparative case study, complemented with NVivo-assisted thematic analysis, can derive contextually rich insights from the analysis based on thick descriptions, coding structures, visualizations, and interview-based interpretation.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This article finds that Indonesian diaspora entrepreneurship in Malaysia and Saudi Arabia can be seen as producing social remittances. Those social remittances are not only created through family, community or return migration, but also through the ways of business execution, local partnerships, adaptation to culture, building trust, and negotiation of culinary identity.

The two examples demonstrate that diaspora entrepreneurs send across borders non-monetary resources such as business knowledge, legal understanding, work ethics, service industry practices, cultural identity, and social capital.

Social remittances in the Malaysian case are manifested through the legal adaptation, identifying with local brands, supplier networks, business standardization, and sharing of entrepreneurship knowledge. In the case of Saudi Arabia, they materialize through Indonesian-Arab culinary hybridization, mediated communication, trust negotiation, adaptation to service, access to suppliers, and involvement with the umrah-related market. These two cases indicate that local partnership is not simply a bureaucratic paper, but a strategic form of social capital that helps legality, market access, cultural understanding, and business sustainability.

On a practical level, Indonesian diaspora entrepreneurs have to upgrade their cross-cultural business competence when they plan to enter host-country markets. Among other things, this means getting to know local rules, consumer behavior, communication styles, supplier systems, and ethics of partnership. Diaspora business communities and Indonesian institutions, on the other hand, need to put together platforms for structured sharing of knowledge, networks of mentorship, programs for legal literacy, and training in cross-cultural business so that individual entrepreneurial experiences can be transformed into social remittances for a wider diaspora and homeland communities.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

This paper only discusses and analyzes two Indonesian diaspora culinary entrepreneurs in Malaysia and Saudi Arabia. Hence, the results are not aimed at statistical generalization but rather at contextual and analytical understanding. This study also heavily depends on the interview as a source of data and thematic analysis carried out with the help of NVivo; in that case, the following research should be based on additional sources such as observations, business documents, customer reviews, social media data, partner interviews, employee interviews, and relevant policy documents.

Besides that, future works of research can increase the number of the case study, country, and business sector studied. Comparative research across Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Europe, or East Asia could give a more comprehensive view of how various cultural, legal, and market environments influence diaspora entrepreneurship and social remittances. Gender, generation, and the degree of dependence on local partners are among the topics that future studies may include.

Finally, the transfer of social remittances generated by diaspora entrepreneurs to Indonesia through mentorship, investment, business training, religious networks, educational programs, community development, and digital knowledge-sharing platforms should be researched more. This will increase the understanding of diaspora entrepreneurship as a vehicle of homeland knowledge circulation and social transformation.

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