

Revealing the genetic diversity of Sumbawa endemic horse using microsatellite-based DNA fingerprint

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Abstract. Sukri A, Dewi IN, Primawati SB, Wangiyana IGAS, Muttaqin Z, Winaya A. 2022. Revealing the genetic diversity of Sumbawa endemic horse using microsatellite-based DNA fingerprint. *Biodiversitas* 23: 4152-4158. Sumbawa horse (*Equus caballus*) is a genetic resource that must be preserved. Sumbawa horses have a significant economic, social, and cultural role. Information on the genetic status of the Sumbawa horse is needed as a step in developing a long-term conservation strategy. Therefore, this study aims to reveal the genetic diversity of the Sumbawa endemic horse using a microsatellite-based DNA fingerprint. DNA isolation was conducted from horse blood samples. Blood samples were taken from two horse farms with 24 individual horses from two different populations, namely Lalar and Liang, West Sumbawa District, Indonesia. Blood was taken from the jugular vein and collected by a qualified veterinarian from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Universitas Pendidikan Mandalika. A total of 4 microsatellite primers were used in this study, INRA032, HEL09, CA425, and AHT4. This study revealed that the genetic diversity of horses in the Lalar population was higher than Liang. A greater number of alleles reinforces this; higher number and frequency of bands; and the presence of specific bands that indicate unique alleles. This research shows that the Sumbawa horse is unique from other horse breeds in the world. This is evidenced by the lower number of alleles per locus (N_a) with a maximum number of two alleles per locus. Sumbawa horses have higher observed heterozygosity (H_o) than expected heterozygosity (H_e), with a H_o value less than 0.5. Analysis of Molecular Variance result has shown that variation within the population was higher than among the population. This is presumably due to the high gene flow in both horse populations caused by inbreeding. In general, AHT4 primers had the best ability to reveal the genetic diversity of Sumbawa horses with the highest Shannon's information index compared to other markers.

Keywords: *Equus caballus*, genetic diversity, microsatellite

INTRODUCTION

DNA fingerprinting is an individual identification technique using individual DNA profiles (Singla et al. 2017). This identification process is carried out by comparing DNA sequences that are unique to each individual (Choi et al. 2008). DNA fingerprinting is widely used in forensics and paternity identification (Krishnamurthy et al. 2011). In addition, DNA fingerprints are also widely used to identify genetic diversity and relationships in plants (Selvakumari et al. 2017; Jamil et al. 2021), poultry genetic diversity (Farrag et al. 2010), livestock (Fadhil et al. 2013), even widely used for the identification of fish species (Al-Faisal et al. 2019). DNA fingerprinting includes techniques such as Restriction Fragment Length Polymorphism (Nishikaku et al. 2019), randomly amplified polymorphic DNA (El-Mouhamady et al. 2019), and Amplified Fragment Length Polymorphism (Vigneshwaran et al. 2017; Malik et al. 2022). Variable Number Tandem Repeat (VNTR) or Short Tandem Repeat (STR) based PCR (Polymerase chain reaction) is most often used in DNA fingerprinting because it has high

sensitivity and the procedure takes less time compare to other DNA fingerprint method (Choi et al. 2008). One of the molecular markers, a Short Tandem Repeat often used for genetic analysis of livestock, is a microsatellite (Teneva et al. 2018).

Microsatellites are single locus DNA sequences with very high polymorphisms that are spread throughout the genome (Heryani et al. 2019). Microsatellites have repeating sequences usually 1 to 6 nucleotides long (Garkovenko et al. 2018). The repetition of this DNA unit can be in the form of mononucleotides, dinucleotides, trinucleotides, tetranucleotides, and so on (Mason 2015; Donnik et al. 2017). Microsatellite DNA markers have been widely used to study genetic diversity because they are randomly distributed throughout the genome, codominant, and have high polymorphism (Putman and Carbone 2014). Microsatellite markers have been widely used for genetic diversity analysis in plants (Saptadi et al. 2020; Parmar et al. 2022), poultry (Luis-Chincoya et al. 2021), cattle (Agung et al. 2019), buffalo (Vohra et al. 2021), and horses (Kim et al. 2021). In Indonesia, research on livestock genetic diversity still needs to be done because

some of the genetic resources of native Indonesian livestock are threatened with extinction due to a small population and limited distribution (Sutarno et al. 2015). One of the leading local livestock owned by Indonesia is the Sumbawa horse (*Equus caballus*) (Wibisono et al. 2017; Mujahid et al. 2019).

Sumbawa horse is one of Indonesia's local horse families, which is a native Indonesian genetic resource that needs to be protected and conserved with a geographical distribution on Sumbawa Island, West Nusa Tenggara (Keputusan Menteri Pertanian 2011). The Sumbawa horse has an essential meaning for the Sumbawa people, both from an economic and socio-cultural perspective. From the economic aspect, Sumbawa horse milk is used for consumption needs in the form of wild horse milk which is beneficial for health (Prastyowati 2021), while from the socio-cultural aspect, Sumbawa horses are used as a horse racing vehicle called "Main Jaran". This horse racing culture has a high value for one's social status. In addition, horse racing culture can strengthen brotherhood, preserve culture and serve as people's entertainment (Asidah 2020). Seeing the importance of the existence of the Sumbawa horse, it is necessary to preserve the genetic resources of the Sumbawa horse. Information on the genetic status of the Sumbawa Horse as one of Indonesia's native livestock is very important as a step in developing a conservation strategy in the long term (Sutarno et al. 2015).

Research that reveals the genetic diversity of Sumbawa horses has never been done. So far, research related to Sumbawa horses has focused on milk quality (Saragih et al. 2013). The latest research on the genetic diversity of horses was reported by Lopian (2021). The study is only a review of the results of research that has been carried out by people in several countries and has not revealed the genetic diversity of the Sumbawa Horse. Another study by

Wibisono et al. (2017) only revealed the morphological diversity of horses and had not used genetic markers. Therefore, this research is critical because it is one of the pioneers in revealing the genetic diversity of the Sumbawa Horse based on DNA fingerprints. The purpose of this study was to reveal the genetic diversity of Sumbawa horses based on DNA fingerprints using microsatellite DNA markers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sampling and DNA purification

DNA isolation was conducted from horse blood samples. Blood samples were taken from two horse farms with 24 individual horses from two different populations, namely Lalar and Liang Village, Taliwang Sub-district, West Sumbawa District, West Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia (Figure 1). Blood was taken from the jugular vein (Sikka and Sethi 2008) located in the jugular groove on each side of the neck from the jaw angle just above the brisket and slightly above the side of the horse's windpipe. Blood samples were collected by a qualified veterinarian from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Universitas Pendidikan Mandalika, Indonesia following the protocol of Zalkovic et al. (2001). Blood samples were put into a tube containing EDTA (Ethylenediamine Tetraacetic Acid) solution, and brought to the laboratory for DNA extraction. DNA was extracted from whole blood samples (Griffiths and Chacon-Cortes 2014) using the NucleoSpin Blood QuickPure kit (Macherey-Nagel, Germany) following a predetermined procedure. The extracted DNA was then separated using Agarose Gel Electrophoresis (Lee et al. 2012) with a concentration of 0.5%.

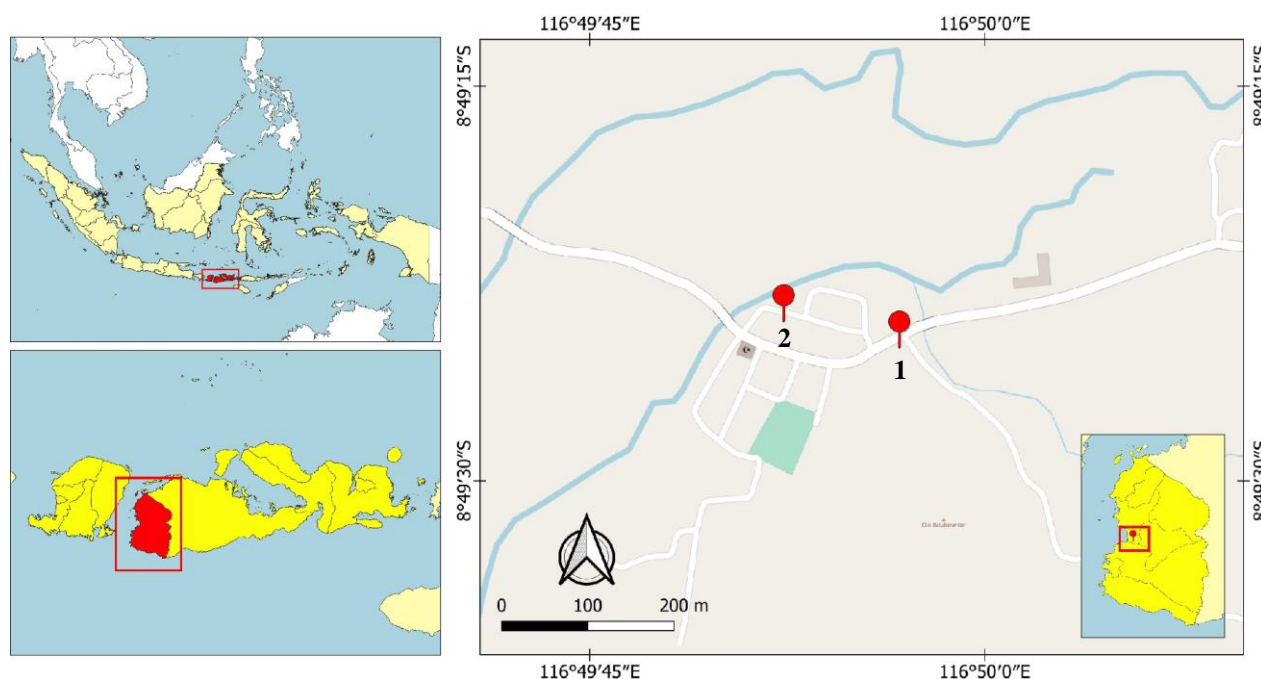


Figure 1. Sumbawa horse sampling location in Lalar Liang Village, Taliwang Sub-district, West Sumbawa District, West Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia. Station 1: Liang Hamlet (8°49'23.8"S 116°49'52.4"E), station 2: Lalar Hamlet (8°49'24.8"S 116°49'56.8"E)

PCR amplification

A total of 4 microsatellite primers were used in this study. Two microsatellite primers were adopted from buffalo microsatellite primers, namely INRA032 (Navani et al. 2002) and HEL09 (Uffo et al. 2017). Meanwhile, two primers were adopted from horse microsatellite primers recommended by the International Society for Animal Genetics, namely CA425 and AHT4 (ISAG 2016). The primer sequences are shown in Table 1. PCR was carried out with a total volume of 25 µL with a mixture of: 2.5 µL DNA template, 2.5 µL forward primer, 2.5 µL reverse primer, 12.5 µL PCR mix, and 5 µL dH₂O (Sukri 2014). The PCR process was carried out in several stages, namely initial denaturation at 95°C for 10 minutes, 30 cycles of 30 seconds at 95°C (Denaturation), 30 seconds at 60°C (Annealing), 1 minute at 72°C (Extension), and finally, final elongation at 72°C for 10 minutes (Moshkelani et al. 2011).

Microsatellite analysis

Genotyping of microsatellite DNA polymorphisms was carried out through agarose gel electrophoresis (Asif et al. 2008), then DNA fragments were analyzed using GeneScan and Genotyper® software (Cozzi et al. 2022). Genetic diversity measures include allele frequency, the observed number of alleles, banding patterns and expected heterozygosity, molecular variance, and similarity relationship based on the dendrogram. Allele frequencies, observed number of alleles, and expected heterozygosity were analyzed using POPGENE v.1.32 and GenAlEx 6.5 software (Peakall and Smouse 2012). Heterozygosity analysis was conducted to describe inter-population variability through allele frequency analysis, while analysis of molecular variance (AMOVA) was conducted to determine variations within and between populations using Arlequin v 3.0 software (Excoffier et al. 2005). Cophenetic correlation analysis was performed on the similarity matrix based on DNA fingerprinting data from microsatellite primers using Co-Stat for Windows. Furthermore, the dendrogram was constructed using the clustering method based on the optimum R value cophenetic correlation results using the Multivariate Statistical Package Ver. 3. (Kasimdari et al. 2019). Finally, the effectiveness of microsatellite primers in revealing the genetic diversity of horses from two populations was measured based on the Shannon Information Index value using the GenAlEx 6.5 software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 49 alleles were detected in 24 individuals of the two tested populations (Lalar and Liang). Each microsatellite marker produced various alleles in the two tested populations. On average, the Lalar population had more alleles than the Liang population. This result was an early indication of the genetic variation between these populations since a different number of alleles was an essential parameter of genetic variation based on microsatellite marker (Ustyantseva et al. 2019).

Table 1. Characteristics of the microsatellite markers used

Name	Sequence	Number of bases
CA425	F: AGCTGCCTCGTTAATTCA R: CTCATGTCCGCTTGTCTC	18 18
AHT4	F: AACCGCCTGAGCAAGGAAGT R: CCCAGAGAGTTTACCCT	20 17
INRA032	F: AAAGTGTATTCTCTAATAGCTAC R: GCAAGACATATCTCCATTCTTT	23 23
HEL09	F: GGAAGCAATGAAATCTATAGCC R: TGTCTGTGAGTTTGTAAGC	22 20

Table 2. Allele frequencies and estimated diversity of each primer

Marker	Pop.	Na	Ne	I	Ho	He
HELL09	Lalar	1.750	1.342	0.366	0.233	0.254
	Liang	2.000	1.491	0.484	0.313	0.341
	Mean	1.875	1.417	0.425	0.273	0.297
INRA032	Lalar	2.000	1.900	0.665	0.472	0.515
	Liang	1.000	1.400	0.318	0.222	0.242
	Mean	1.500	1.650	0.492	0.347	0.379
CA415	Lalar	2.000	1.552	0.493	0.325	0.355
	Liang	1.600	1.476	0.424	0.283	0.309
	Mean	1.800	1.514	0.459	0.304	0.332
AHT4	Lalar	2.000	1.432	0.452	0.286	0.312
	Liang	2.000	1.557	0.540	0.356	0.388
	Mean	2.000	1.495	0.496	0.321	0.350

Note: Na: Number of alleles per locus, Ne: Number of effective alleles per locus, I: Shannon's information index, Ho: Observed heterozygosity, He: Expected heterozygosity

Several parameters were computed to measure genetic variability between the Lalar and Liang populations (Table 2). The number of alleles per locus (Na) in the Lalar population and Liang population was always higher than the number of effective alleles per locus (Ne) on all markers (except for the INRA032 marker). A genetic population study on horse breeds based on horse microsatellite markers commonly resulted in higher Na than Ne (Fornal et al. 2020). Higher Ne than Na on the INRA032 marker may be due to this marker was not a specific microsatellite marker for horse breed.

The number of different alleles per locus (Na) was a common genetic variation in horse breed based on microsatellite markers. Western Arabian Horse Na varied from 3-5 (Khanshour et al. 2013), Iranian horse has Na from 3-4 (Moshkelani et al. 2011), Polish Konik Horse has Na varied from 5-6 (Fornal et al. 2020), Akhal-Teke horse has Na varied from 3-4 (Ustyantseva et al. 2019). Sumbawa-Indonesian horse in this study has a lower number of Na than horse breeds from other regions of the world since these horse breeds only have a maximum of two numbers of alleles per locus. The lalar population has an average Na value higher than the Na value of the Liang population.

The number of observed heterozygosity (Ho) in the Sumbawa-Indonesia horse population was lower than the number of expected heterozygosity (He). The low value of Ho (below 0.5) indicates that this horse population has

suffered a loss of heterozygosity due to increased inbreeding. However, this result also indicates the unique genetic characteristic of the Sumbawa-Indonesian breed compared to the genetic characteristic of horse breeds from Asia, Africa, and Europe. Most horse populations from Asia, Europe, and Africa have H_o values higher than 0.5 (Gómez et al. 2017; Dorji et al. 2018; Benahamadi et al. 2020). Sumbawa-Indonesian horse population has heterozygosity characteristics similar to the American (Brazilian) horse breed with a H_o value less than 0.5 (Reis et al. 2008). Moreover, the Brazilian American horse mostly has a H_o value lower than the H_e value, just like Indonesia–Sumbawa horse (Table 3) (Silva et al. 2012).

Molecular variation based on microsatellites (Single Sequence Repeats) has become a typical analysis for population genetic study (Vieira et al. 2016). Microsatellite marker specified for horse breed has been developed to reveal genetic variation in different horse breed (Mahrous et al. 2011). AHT4 in this study was a specified microsatellite marker for a horse that could reveal genetic diversity among the Sumbawa-Indonesia horse population compared to other markers. AHT4 marker could produce the highest Shannon's information index among other markers. This marker also produces a consistent number of alleles per locus on the Lalar and Liang populations. This result implicated that AHT4 was a useful microsatellite marker for the genetic population study of the Indonesian horse breed.

The banding pattern across the population graphic in Figure 2 has shown that the Lalar population has a higher number of bands and band frequency than that of the Liang population. The Lalar population also has several private bands representing unique allele loci to a single population. Banding patterns and heterozygosity graphics were standard analyses for horse genetic population diversity studies (Mahrous et al. 2011; Seo et al. 2016). This result indicates that the genetic diversity of the Lalar population was higher than the genetic diversity of the Liang population.

Table 3. Comparison of the Sumbawa horses' H_o and H_e values and other horses in the world

Population	H_o	H_e	Reference
Lalar Sumbawa Horse	0.31	0.36	This research
Liang Sumbawa Horse	0.29	0.32	This research
Brazilian-American Horse	0.32	0.57	(Reis et al. 2008)
Algerian-African Horse	0.67	0.71	(Benahamadi et al. 2020)
Bhutan-Asian Horse	0.79	0.78	(Dorji et al. 2018)
Marismeno-Europe Horse	0.77	0.78	(Gómez et al. 2017)
Akhal Teke Horse	0.72	0.70	(Ustyantseva et al. 2019)
Iranian-Arab Horse	0.75	0.73	(Moshkelani et al. 2011)

Table 4. Analysis of molecular variance result of Lalar population and Liang population

Source	df	SS	MS	Est. variance	Variance percentage
Among population	1	6.125	6.125	0.287	10%
Within population	22	58.917	2.678	2.678	90%
Total	23	65.042		2.965	100%

Table 5. Comparison of different methods for constructing similarity matrices and dendrogram

Similarity matrices	Algorithm	Co-phenetic coefficient	S.E. of r
Simple Matching	UPGMA	0.827	0.034
Simple Matching	Single Linkage	0.697	0.043
Simple Matching	Complete Linkage	0.827	0.034
Jaccard	UPGMA	0.940	0.021
Jaccard	Single Linkage	0.925	0.023
Jaccard	Complete Linkage	0.900	0.026
Nei and Li (Dice)	UPGMA	0.889	0.028
Nei and Li (Dice)	Single Linkage	0.929	0.022
Nei and Li (Dice)	Complete Linkage	0.893	0.027

Note: UPGMA: un-weighted pair-group method using arithmetic average

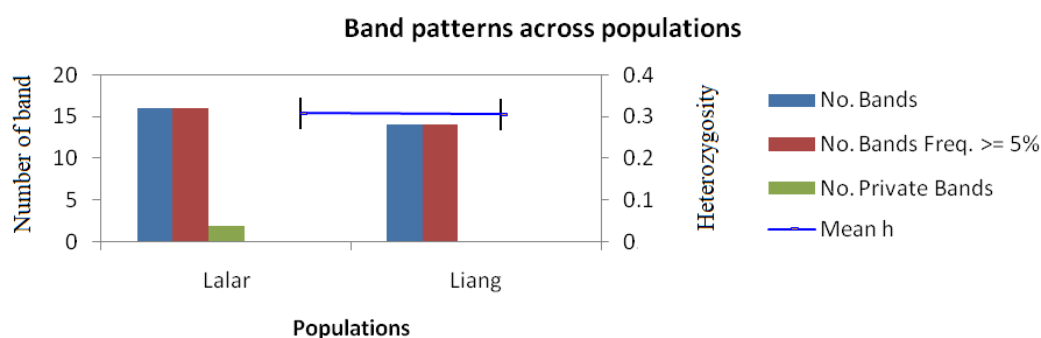
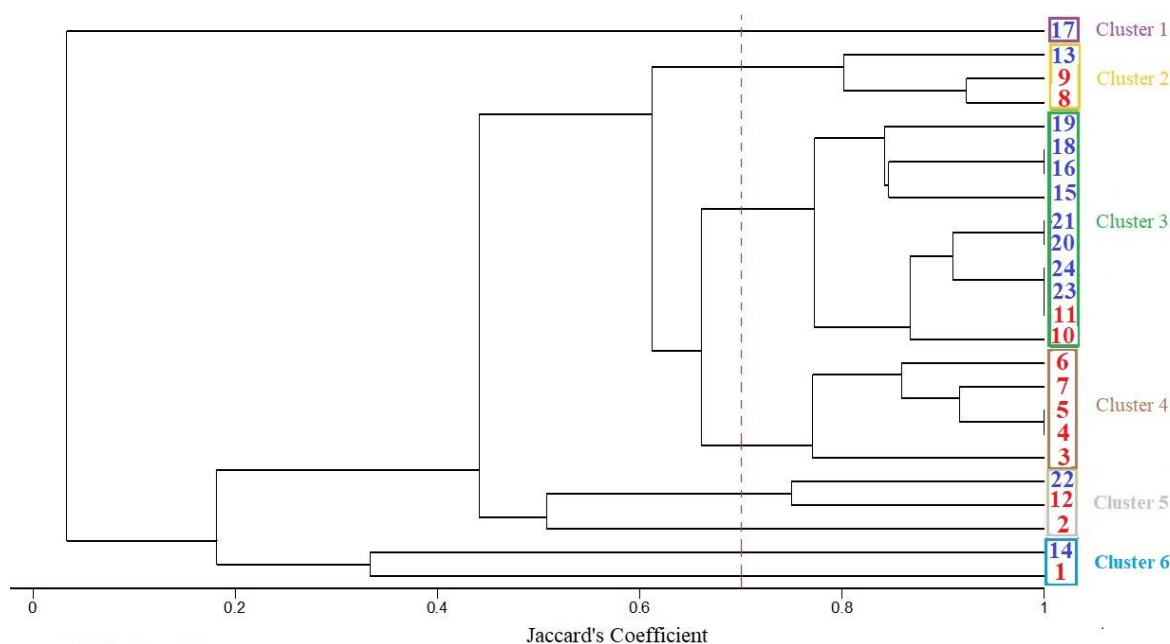


Figure 2. Band pattern analysis using all primers



1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 = Lalar Population
 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 = Liang Population

Figure 3. Dendrogram based on UPGMA algorithm and Jaccard coefficient

Analysis of Molecular Variance (AMOVA) based on F-statistics calculation is one of the most frequent methods to determine a population's genetic structure (Meirmans 2012). AMOVA result has shown that variation within the population was higher than variation among the population (Table 4). This genetic structure indicated the high level of gene flow between the Lalar population and Liang population. The same result was found in the AMOVA result of the Bosnian mountain horse population which variation within the population was much higher than variation among the population. It is suggested that the high gene flow in several horse populations is due to a high level of inbreeding between populations (Rukavina et al. 2021).

Various banding patterns of all microsatellite primers were tabulated and sorted based on their molecular weight. These bands were treated as DNA fingerprinting characters for similarity value calculation. Similarity value was essential for clustering analysis for dendrogram construction (Wangiyana et al. 2022). This systematic step has been used recently for genetic diversity studies based on microsatellite DNA fingerprinting (Driskill et al. 2022; Fiore et al. 2022). This research also applied microsatellite DNA fingerprinting to study horse population genetic diversity. It could update different approaching methods for genetic diversity study on horse populations based on microsatellite markers that commonly only focus on allele frequency, heterozygosity, and polymorphism information (Mahrous et al. 2011).

Similarity matrices and dendrograms based on microsatellite DNA fingerprinting were constructed using different methods (Table 5). Co-phenetic correlation

analysis was used to examine the correlation between the similarity value represented on the dendrograms (sorted similarity matrix) and the actual similarity value calculated for each dendrogram (unsorted similarity matrix). Co-phenetic correlation coefficient (r) could determine the distortion between the unsorted similarity matrix and the sorted similarity matrix (Carvalho et al. 2019). UPGMA algorithm and Jaccard's similarity coefficients have the highest r -value (0.940) among the other methods. This result is similar to the co-phenetic correlation analysis based on microsatellite DNA fingerprinting that used different similarity matrices (Jaccard, Dice, and simple matching) and algorithms (UPGMA, complete linkage, single linkage) on flue-cured tobacco genotypes (Gholizadeh et al. 2012). However, this result could be considered a novel finding on microsatellite DNA fingerprinting on horse samples since no co-phenetic correlation analysis has been reported in horse population genetic study.

Dendrograms were constructed using the UPGMA algorithm and Jaccard Similarity coefficient based on co-phenetic correlation analysis (Figure 3). Cluster member on this dendrogram could be determined by the cut of value on the Jaccard coefficient, recommended at 0.7 (Wangiyana et al. 2021). Based on the cut of value, there were 6 clusters on this dendrogram with various members. The uniqueness of this dendrogram is that most cluster has both Lalar population individuals and Liang population individual. Cluster 5 is the only cluster with Lalar Population individuals without mixing with Liang population individuals. This result has emphasized the high gene flow

between Lalar Population and Liang Population that was previously described in the AMOVA result.

Similarity relationship on the horse by dendrogram construction based on microsatellite marker could be tested its validity compared with other markers. RAPD marker could be chosen as a comparison since this marker was commonly used in the similarity relationship study of the horse with dendrogram construction (Abdulrazaq et al. 2019). Dendrogram based on microsatellite marker has lower similarity value than dendrogram based on RAPD marker (Hassan et al. 2019). This result indicated that the microsatellite marker could differentiate Organism Taxonomical Unit (OTU) on particular similarity values that could not differentiate by the RAPD marker.

Genetic diversity analysis of Sumbawa horses showed that there was a specific band that became a unique allele in the Lalar population. In addition, the higher number and frequency of bands in the Lalar population makes it a population with higher genetic diversity than the Liang population. In general, Sumbawa horses are unique compared to other horses, as indicated by the low value of N_a per locus and a higher H_o value than H_e with a value of less than 0.5. The molecular analysis of variance results indicated the presence of gene flow in the two observed populations. This is evidenced by the value of variation within the population higher than between populations. This result was also strengthened by the similarity analysis, which showed a cluster consisting of individual horses from the two observed populations. The Shannon Information Index analysis results revealed that the AHT4 primer had the best ability to reveal the genetic diversity of Sumbawa horses compared to other primers.

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