

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DECISION OF INDONESIANS TO WORK IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract: This study aims to examine the factors that influence Indonesians' decision to work in Malaysia using qualitative methods. Labor migration from Indonesia to Malaysia is a phenomenon driven by various factors, including economic, social, psychological, and cultural factors. Economic factors, such as the opportunity to earn higher wages and better job opportunities, are often the main motivations for migrant workers. In addition, social factors, such as a network of family or friends already working in Malaysia, facilitate the migration process. Psychological factors such as the hope of improving social status in Indonesia, as well as cultural factors related to the similarities in language and religion between the two countries, also influence the decision. Using a qualitative approach, this study explores the deeper motives behind labor migration decisions through interviews and thematic analysis. The results show that a combination of economic, social, psychological and cultural factors influence Indonesians' decision to work in Malaysia. This research provides a deeper insight into the motivations of migrant workers and can be the basis for policy formulation related to the protection and welfare of migrant workers.

Keywords: Labor migration, economic factors, social factors, psychological factors, cultural factors, Indonesian migrant workers, Malaysia.

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of international labor migration, particularly from Indonesia to Malaysia, has become one of the most important issues affecting the socio-economic dynamics of both countries. Malaysia is one of the main destination countries for Indonesian migrant workers, who are attracted by better job opportunities, higher wages, and geographical and cultural proximity. However, the decision of Indonesians to work in Malaysia is not only based on economic factors alone, but is also influenced by social, psychological, cultural factors, and labor conditions in Malaysia.

The rapid economic growth in Malaysia is a major attraction for Indonesian labor. As a result, Indonesian migrant workers to Indonesia have contributed significantly to the domestic economy.

The high number of Indonesian migrant workers working in Malaysia reflects various internal and external forces. In addition to economic factors, such as the need to improve family financial conditions, social factors in the form of a network of family or friends who have worked abroad, as well as cultural factors that encourage individuals to follow in the footsteps of their peers who have successfully worked abroad, also influence the decision. According to Suradji (2019) The close socio-cultural relationship between Indonesia and Malaysia also facilitates the integration process of Indonesian migrant workers with the local community.

Similar language and customs between the two countries make the adaptation process smoother. In a psychological context, the hope of improving social status in the home country is often a motivation for many workers.

This study aims to examine the various factors that influence Indonesians' decision to work in Malaysia using a qualitative approach. This research is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the motives that drive labor migration as well as the implications for employment policy and the welfare of migrant workers.

2. Literature Review

Literature Economic Factors, Economic factors include financial motives that are the main drivers for people to work abroad. These include higher wage rates, better job opportunities, and the ability to send money to family back home. In a study by Suryahadi et al. (2021), it is concluded that the wage difference between Indonesia and Malaysia is one of the biggest attractions for migrant workers. They highlighted that wages in the construction and plantation sectors in Malaysia are much higher than in Indonesia. Another study by Hasanah (2020) revealed that remittances made by migrant workers are the main source of income for families left behind in Indonesia. Another study from Bernardianto & Sandita (2017) also revealed that the needs of life that must be met are always a factor in people migrating to get a bigger income because of the economic backwardness that occurs in rural areas due to the narrow employment opportunities. Family income is one of the drivers of a person to migrate.

Social Factors, Social factors relate to the role of social networks, such as family and friends, who have worked in Malaysia before. These networks often provide emotional and financial support and information on available jobs. Hugo (2020) in his research highlights the role of social networks in the migration process. These networks not only facilitate the decision-making process to migrate, but also help workers find jobs, housing, and provide social support during their stay in Malaysia. Research by Wahyuni & Taufik (2022) found that family who have previously worked in Malaysia is often a determining factor in a person's decision to migrate.

Psychological Factors, Psychological factors include migrant workers' expectations of improving their social status after working abroad, as well as the personal satisfaction derived from being able to support their families and improve their living conditions. Fachrudin & Ma'ruf (2022) explain that the hope of improving social status in the home country is a strong motivating factor for migrant workers. They are often seen as successful if they manage to work abroad. Research by Ratnasari (2021) also confirms that family pride in members who work abroad is one of the psychological factors that influence migration decisions.

Cultural Factors Cultural factors relate to the similarities in language, religion and values between Indonesia and Malaysia, which make the adaptation process easier for migrant workers. However, there are also differences in norms and work habits that can pose challenges for workers. According to Santoso & Sihombing (2021), although there are many cultural similarities between Indonesia and Malaysia, such as the similar Malay language and the dominant religion of Islam, there are also significant differences in work culture. Migrant workers often face challenges in adjusting to different work demands, such as time discipline and how to communicate with superiors, single spaced.

3. Method

This research uses a qualitative approach in which this research is carried out only descriptively to explore these factors in depth through interviews and observations. This approach is used because it is in accordance with the object and subject matter to be studied which requires a careful and thorough observation and understanding of the research object.

Respondents are research objects that can provide research results regarding the factors that influence the decision of the Indonesian people to work in Malaysia. To find out this, the respondents in this study were Indonesian migrant workers working in Malaysia. Researchers found as many as 10 respondents. The research indicators are economic factors, social factors, psychological factors and cultural factors.

Table 1. Economic Factors

No.	Data	Statement
1	Primary data	Higher salary is the main reason for deciding to work in Malaysia
2	Primary data	The cost of living in Malaysia is more affordable than other countries
3	Primary data	Greater opportunity to save if working in Malaysia

Table 2. Social Factors

No.	Data	Statement
1	Primary data	Support from family and friends was crucial in the decision to work in Malaysia.
2	Primary data	Relatives and friends in Malaysia are very helpful in adapting to a new life.

Table 3. Psychological Factors

No.	Data	Statement
1	Primary data	Working in Malaysia gives me the opportunity to develop myself
2	Primary data	I feel challenged to work in a new environment

Table 4. Cultural Factors

No.	Data	Statement
1	Primary data	The culture in Malaysia is not too different from the culture in Indonesia
2	Primary data	I feel that I have gained more diverse life experiences
3	Primary data	Malaysians have a high regard for foreign culture

4. Result and Discussion

An analysis of the factors that influence the decisions of Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia can be summarized from four aspects: economic, social, psychological, and cultural.

a) Economic Factors

In terms of economics, the questionnaire results show that 50% of respondents agree that higher salaries are the main reason they work in Malaysia, while 40% strongly agree with this statement. This shows that their main motivation is the higher salary. The necessities of life that must be met are a factor in many people migrating to earn a higher income. In addition, 50% of respondents felt that they had greater savings opportunities in Malaysia, indicating that the financial aspect was a significant factor in their decision to work in the country.

b) Social Factors

On social factors, support from family and friends played an important role, with 50% of respondents neutral and another 30% agreeing that social support influenced their decision to work in Malaysia. In addition, 70% of respondents stated that friends and relatives in Malaysia were very helpful in their adaptation process, confirming the importance of social networks in helping migrant workers adapt to a new life.

c) Psychological Factors

Psychologically, 70% of respondents felt that working in Malaysia gave them the opportunity to develop themselves, while another 60% felt challenged to work in a new environment. This suggests that personal development and new challenges also play a significant role in their decision to work abroad.

d) Cultural Factors

In terms of culture, although 50% of respondents stated that Malaysian culture is not too different from Indonesian culture, only 30% strongly agreed with this statement. As many as 70% of respondents felt that they had more diverse life experiences while working in Malaysia. This confirms that despite cultural similarities, differences and diversity still provide added value for migrant workers in their daily lives.

5. Conclusions

It can be concluded that economic factors are the main motivation for Indonesian migrant workers to work in Malaysia, especially in relation to higher salaries and better savings opportunities. Social factors, such as support from family and friends and assistance from relatives in Malaysia, also play an important role in the workers' adaptation process. In addition, psychological factors, such as the opportunity for self-development and the challenge of working in a new environment, are attractive. While the Malaysian culture was not perceived to be very different, a more diverse cultural experience was felt by most respondents, indicating that cultural diversity remains an important element in their experience.

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