

Factors Influencing the International Migration Intention of Human Resources: A Study of Thai Skilled Workforces in Malaysia

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Abstract

The purposes of this research were to study the demographic characteristics among Thai skilled workforces in Malaysia, and to investigate the relationship between the Economic factor and Socio-cultural factor toward international migration intention among Thai skilled workforces in Malaysia. The data were collected from 346 samples through online survey. Descriptive statistics showed the demographic characteristics among Thai skilled workforces in Malaysia were that most of Thai skilled workforces who work in Malaysia are attached in Technology, Information & Communications industry, most of them are young people aged 23-30 years old, working for 1-5 years' experiences and earn more than RM5,000/month. A correlation and multiple regression analysis were tested to investigate the relationship between the Economic factor, and Socio-cultural factor toward international migration intention. The result showed that there was a moderate positive correlation between Economic factor and Workforces' Migration Intention ($r = 0.324$, $p < 0.01$). The positive correlation between Socio-Cultural and Workforces' Migration Intention was also moderate ($r = 0.390$ and $p < 0.01$). A multiple regression analysis showed that Economic, and Socio-Cultural were positively significant predictors toward Workforces' Migration Intention ($P < 0.05$). In addition, the study found that Socio-Cultural factor gave the highest impact (Beta = 0.304) while Economic factor had the lower impact (Beta = 0.149) towards Workforces' Migration Intention. This shows that Thai skilled workforces in Malaysia are attracted by a higher share of same-type of social and culture in the destination country. The results of this study contribute to the literature by enhancing the understanding of workforces' migration intention especially within the context of Thailand-Malaysia. Specifically, this study could offer important policy for ministry of labour who seeks to understand international labour migration among Thai workforces.

Keywords: International Migration; Human Resources; Skilled Workforces

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ปัจจัยที่มีอิทธิพลต่อความตั้งใจในการเคลื่อนย้ายถิ่นฐานระหว่างประเทศของทรัพยากรมนุษย์: กรณีศึกษาแรงงานฝีมือชาวไทยในมาเลเซีย

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วัตถุประสงค์ของงานวิจัยฉบับนี้เพื่อศึกษาลักษณะทางประชากรศาสตร์ของแรงงานฝีมือชาวไทยในมาเลเซีย และเพื่อศึกษาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างปัจจัยทางเศรษฐกิจ ปัจจัยทางสังคม-วัฒนธรรมต่อความตั้งใจในการเคลื่อนย้ายถิ่นฐานระหว่างประเทศของแรงงานฝีมือชาวไทยในมาเลเซีย จากกลุ่มตัวอย่างจำนวน 346 ตัวอย่าง ผ่านการสำรวจรูปแบบออนไลน์ ข้อมูลสถิติเชิงพรรณนาแสดงให้เห็นลักษณะทางประชากรศาสตร์ของแรงงานฝีมือชาวไทยในมาเลเซียส่วนใหญ่ทำงานอยู่ในอุตสาหกรรมเทคโนโลยี สารสนเทศ และการสื่อสาร ซึ่งมีอายุเฉลี่ย 23-30 ปี มีประสบการณ์การทำงานระหว่าง 1-5 ปี และมีรายได้มากกว่า 5,000 บาทต่อเดือน การวิเคราะห์สหสัมพันธ์และการถดถอยพหุคูณได้รับการทดสอบเพื่อหาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างปัจจัยทางเศรษฐกิจ และปัจจัยทางสังคม-วัฒนธรรมที่มีต่อความตั้งใจในการเคลื่อนย้ายถิ่นฐานระหว่างประเทศ ผลการวิจัยพบว่ามีความสัมพันธ์เชิงบวกในระดับปานกลางระหว่างปัจจัยทางเศรษฐกิจต่อความตั้งใจในการย้ายถิ่นของแรงงานฝีมือ ($r = 0.324$, $p < 0.01$) และความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างปัจจัยทางสังคม-วัฒนธรรมต่อความตั้งใจในการย้ายถิ่นของแรงงานฝีมือ มีความสัมพันธ์เชิงบวกในระดับปานกลางเช่นเดียวกัน ($r = 0.390$ และ $p < 0.01$) การวิเคราะห์การถดถอยพหุคูณแสดงให้เห็นว่าปัจจัยทางเศรษฐกิจ และสังคม-วัฒนธรรมเป็นตัวแปรที่มีนัยสำคัญในเชิงบวกต่อความตั้งใจในการย้ายถิ่นฐาน ($P < 0.05$) นอกจากนี้ จากการศึกษาพบว่าปัจจัยทางสังคม-วัฒนธรรมมีผลสูงที่สุดต่อความตั้งใจในการเคลื่อนย้ายถิ่นฐานของแรงงานฝีมือชาวไทย ($Beta = 0.304$) ในขณะที่ปัจจัยทางเศรษฐกิจมีผลน้อยกว่า ($Beta = 0.149$) ผลจากการศึกษา พบว่าแรงงานฝีมือชาวไทยในมาเลเซียได้รับแรงจูงใจในการเคลื่อนย้ายถิ่นฐานจากปัจจัยทางสังคม-วัฒนธรรมที่มีลักษณะคล้ายคลึงกันกับประเทศปลายทางเป็นอย่างสูง ทั้งนี้ ผลจากการศึกษามีส่วนในการเสริมความรู้และสร้างความเข้าใจต่อปัจจัยที่ทำให้เกิดการย้ายถิ่นฐานของแรงงาน โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งในบริบทของประเทศไทย-มาเลเซีย โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่ง การศึกษาในครั้งนี้อาจมีส่วนช่วยในการกำหนดนโยบายที่สำคัญของกระทรวงแรงงาน จากการทำความเข้าใจเรื่องการย้ายถิ่นฐานของแรงงานระหว่างประเทศในหมู่แรงงานชาวไทย

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1. Introduction

An international migration of human resources is seen as a human capital investment that includes costs and returns. Labour migration has been a driving force behind the economic and social growth, it is generally acknowledged that international migration has led to improve livelihoods in countries of origin and fills the opportunities in destination countries with labour shortages (Kaur, 2014). However, employment discrimination toward migrant minorities have been one of the international labour challenges in the human resource practices (Binggeli, Dietz, & Krings, 2013).

In the age of international labour markets, the demand for foreign workforces as inputs of production in labour-importing countries is the key driver of international labour migration. Based on the studies of factors that cause mobility of human capital, the quality of life factor plays an important role in migration, but only if the required condition of employment is met (Sleutjes, 2016). The relationship between educational achievements and migration is commonly confirmed empirically as Faggian, Corcoran, & Partridge (2015) found that the more education shows the greater possibility of inter-regional mobility.

Labour migrants accounted for nearly 59% of the world's foreign migrant population in 2017 (ILO, 2018). Among approximately 140,000 Thai workforces who work abroad, more than 100,000 Thai workforces employed in South Asian countries, followed by 6,000 people in Europe and America, 27,000 people in Middle East, and around 700 employed in African countries (Chalamwong, 2020).

In particular, about 7,000 Thai workforces who work in Southeast Asian countries. As Table 1 shows that Malaysia is ranked the top leading country of destination for Thai workforces' mobility. In response to steady economic expansion and demographic shifts, Malaysia has experienced an increase in foreign labour inflows.

Table 1 Number of Thai labour in ASEAN Countries and ASEAN labour in Thailand

Country	Thai Labour in ASEAN		ASEAN Labour in Thailand	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1. Singapore	2,323	31.7	1,562	0.05
2. Malaysia	3,254	44.4	N/A	-
3. Indonesia	332	4.5	1,041	0.04
4. The Philippines	24	0.3	18,796	0.68
5. Brunei	876	12.0	N/A	-
6. Lao PDR	376	5.1	280,900	10.11
7. Myanmar	N/A	-	1,823,588	65.63
8. Vietnam	115	1.6	915	0.03
9. Cambodia	23	0.3	651,641	23.45
Total	7,323	100	2,778,443	100

Source: The National Statistical Office of Thailand, November 2019

Note. It is estimated that there are over 20,000 Thai workforces in Malaysia but only 10.9% are registered workforces

The World Bank Report (2013) clarified that Malaysia's rapid economic growth and coupled with labour market shortages, continues to attract foreign workers from neighbouring countries. Over the last decade, a growing number of migrants from Thailand have migrated permanently and temporarily to Malaysia in search of employment and life stability, leading to increased labour supply in the Malaysian labour market. Most of these migrants are known to be of both unskilled and skilled workforces. In addition, most of Thai workforces in Malaysia are from southern border provinces, who shared the same culture and belief as Malaysian people. Many of Thai workforces from the southern border areas travel to Malaysia to work (Jampaklay, Ford, & Chamrathirong, 2017).

As Malaysia is ranked the top leading country of destination for Thai workforces' mobility, therefore this research attempts to study on factors that influence Thai workforces who have moved to work in Malaysia, which only focuses on skilled workforces. The overall research questions were: What are demographic characteristics among Thai skilled workforces in Malaysia? and What are the relationship between economic factor, and socio-cultural factor toward international migration intention among Thai skilled workforces in Malaysia?

2. Research Objectives

The study intends to narrow the existing research gap by addressing the following research objectives;

2.1 To study the demographic characteristics among Thai skilled workforces in Malaysia.

2.2 To investigate the relationship between economic factor towards international migration intention among Thai skilled workforces in Malaysia.

2.3 To investigate the relationship between socio-cultural factor towards international migration intention among Thai skilled workforces in Malaysia.

3. Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

3.1 Literature Review

The studies of international labour migration to developed countries among migrants have been observed. Relative economic prosperity and political stability in the European countries are considered to have had a major attraction impact on labour migrants, especially non-Europeans. Traditionally, the highest number of labour migrants has been in Germany, France and the United Kingdom, but recent migration flows to Spain and Ireland have increased (Enache & Rabanal, 2020) due to the economic, social and cultural factors are very significant causes of mobility.

Previous studies of the movement of Asians to South East Asia countries have shown the significance of labour migration. For example, apart from the Gulf countries, the emerging Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states are the key destinations for labour migrants from Asia, i.e. Malaysia or Thailand. The study of Dewanto (2020) showed that the number of foreign workforces in Malaysia is over 3 million, according to Labour Force Surveys by the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) found that the international labour force has hovered about 15 percent of the overall labour force in recent years.

Several theories have been applied to explain the concept of workforce migration, this study is placed within Push-Pull Theory and Lee's Migration Theory because the theories strongly aim to formalize a 'theory' of migration that would include a scheme of variables that could clarify the migration volume between origin and destination.

3.1.1 Push-Pull Theory

Push-Pull theory was found by Ernest Ravenstein in which is regarded as the earliest migration theory (Ravenstein, 1876). The theory suggested that migration was controlled by a 'push-pull' manner; that is, unfavourable conditions in one place 'push out' people and 'pull out' them under favourable conditions.

Ravenstein believed that better external economic opportunities were the primary cause of migration, migration takes place at a point instead of a long one, and migration differentials by age, gender, and social status affect the mobility of individuals.

Van Hear, Bakewell, & Long (2017) further explained that the theory focused on a combination of factors that inspire people to leave their country and factors that attract them to relocate to their destination. Push factors are factors that cause migrants to leave their homes and relate to the country from which they move. While pull factors include the loss of opportunity to adequate livelihood, poverty, rapid population growth that exceeds the available resources, poor living conditions, fear of social unrest, poor health care, loss of wealth and natural disasters. Okafor & Chimereze (2020) also noted that people are relocate for several of reasons, such as economic, political, family, educational, medical, career and the better quality of life. This circumstance is not limited to ethnicity, gender, age or educational attainment; as both male or female, old or young, educated or uneducated take on this act.

3.1.2 Lee's Migration Theory

In the perspective of Lee's migration theory, the factors related with the migration decision and the migration process have been conceptualized into the following four categories: 1) Push factors characterising the place of origin; 2) Pull factors characterising the place of destination 3) Intervening obstacles in migration; and 4) Personal factors.

Theoretically, both place of origin and destination have a set of positive and negative factors. Although positive factors are the conditions that act to keep people inside or attract people from other places, negative factors appear to repel them. A migration related decision is made on the basis of disparity between the two places. In this sense, push and pull factors communicate with each individual resource pool, needs and experiences. The migration decision is a complex balance between incentives, capacity and perceived costs and benefits (Krasteva, McDonnell, & Tolgensbakk, 2019).

Intervening challenges must also be resolved before migration actually takes place. These cover both distance and transportation. However, technical advancements have reduced their importance in modern times.

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Apart from the factors related to origin and destination places, and the intervening obstacles, there are also personal factors. Personal factors are of the greatest concern because regardless of the actual factors related with the place of origin and/or destination, the individual's interpretation of these factors has been shown to have an effect on the actual act of migration. These factors include age, gender, and educational background.

Lee's migration theory suggested that factors such as distance, political barriers, and physical environment could discourage migration. Lee also pointed out that the migration practice depends on personal characteristics because differentials in age, gender and social status have an impact on people's reaction to push-pull factors, which often affect their ability to resolve obstacles. In addition, personal factors such as education background, family relations and the like can encourage or impede migration.

Push-Pull Theory and Lee's Migration Theory have been discussed the migration flows concept, and showed that both push and pull factors have been described as the main cause of migrants escape their homeland and moving to other destinations. This study adds to the literature by concentrating on numerous empirical studies which focus on factors motivate international migrants' workforce.

Several international migration studies have found that economic conditions show a key aspect in migrant's decision to migrate. The lack of job opportunities or gaps in employment opportunities and wages are major driving forces of international labour migration that could lead migrants to consider leaving home (Mohamed & Abdul-Talib, 2020; Stanojoska & Petrevski, 2012). However, the study of Castelli (2018) showed that several skilled workforces in developing countries may also have been forced to migrate due to unfavourable circumstances in their home country, for example economic decline and political conflict.

Saar (2016) found that socio-demographic factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, family status and socio-economic status are significant for labour migration intentions. However, the study revealed that trends of migration were changing, as stereotypical migrant, male and skilled migrants were searching for ways to accumulate money before returning to their origin country (Parutis, 2014) but recent studies showed that skilled migrants involved in self-development, new cultural experiences, etc. This possibly because current migrations are becoming more diversified and more dynamic.

Socio-cultural integration relates to the willingness of migrants to become part of the local society (Gijsberts & Dagevos, 2007). Socio-cultural covers several elements such as attitudes toward the cultural factors in the local society, language, or the sense of belonging to the host society. In

addition, religion also plays a major role as it offers a source of harmony within the destination with regard to social norms.

Based on the previous studies, this research focuses on the economic factor, and the most common components of social-cultural integration and proposes according to society, culture, religion, language, and environment are important determinants for the intention of international labour migration.

3.1.3 Conceptualizations of Main Constructs

1) Economic Factor Influences Workforces' Migration Intention

Humans decide to migrate for several reasons, the study of Gentile (2019) found that economic factor was one of the main reasons for human migration in order to improve their financial circumstances, and employment opportunities. Workforce migrants are motivated to international migration by the possibility of higher wages, higher pay, and in many cases, a desire to leave the poor labour market situation of their home country. International Migrants in Southeast Asia are migrating to seek better opportunities, as the findings of Hamzah, et al. (2020) revealed that the factors attracting foreign workforces to Malaysia were economic stability, living policy, reliance on foreign workforces, wage disparities, and greater demand for labour from various sectors.

2) Socio-Cultural Factor Influences Workforces' Migration Intention

Several empirical evidences showed the socio-cultural has the potential to cause significant factors which influence international migration and population movements. The study of Richard (2016) found out that social conditions are more likely to be the reason of humanitarian migrants. Some individuals are likely to move to the country that shared a common culture, religion, or language. The study of Adsera & Pytlikova (2015) also showed that linguistic proximity encourages migratory flows. Nevertheless, a better environment condition also has the potential to increase the rate of workforces' migration (Altanchimeg, Nam, & Sarantuya, 2020).

In addition, Table 2 shows summary of studies of factors influencing migration intention which found that economic factor which involved labour market, economic growth, cost of living, and socio-cultural factor involved society, culture, religion, language, environment influenced the intention of international migration.

Table 2 A Summary of Literature by Authors

Factors Influencing the International Migration Intention of Human Resources

	Authors							
	Hamzah et al. (2020)	Mohamed & Abdul-Talib (2020)	Richard (2016)	Adsera & Pytlíkova (2015)	Altanchimeg et al. (2020)	Adsera (2015)	Phanseub (2011)	Beine, Simone, & Jesus Fernandez (2016)
Economic Factor:								
Wage	X	X			X			
Labour Market	X					X		
Economic Growth	X					X		
Cost of Living	X						X	X
Socio-Cultural:								
Society			X				X	
Culture			X		X	X	X	
Religion			X			X		
Language			X	X				
Environment					X		X	

3.2 Conceptual Framework

Based on the literature, the study proposed two dimensions of potentially influential factors:

(i) Economic, and (ii) Socio-Cultural characteristics toward migration intention among Thai skilled workforces in Malaysia as shown in Figure 1.

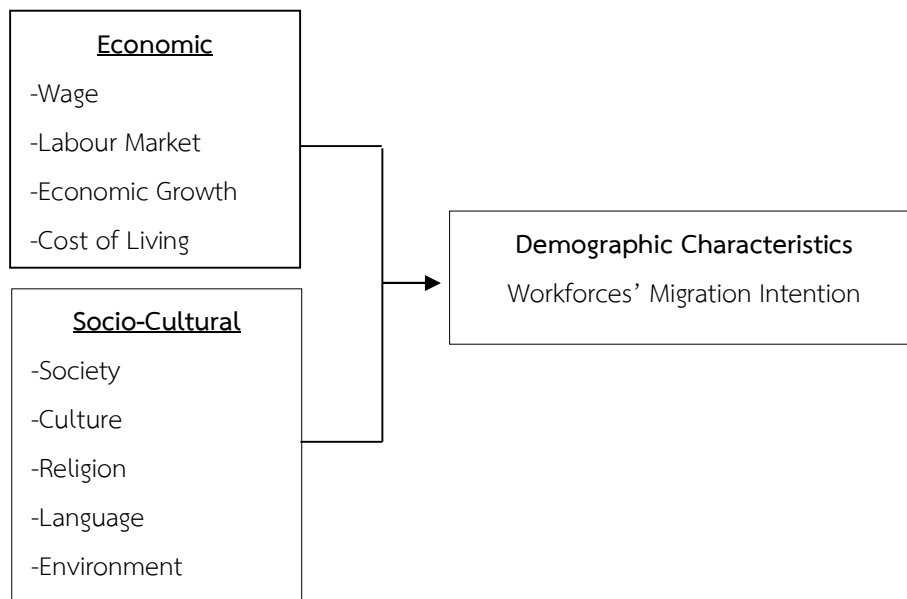


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

4. Methodology

4.1 Population and Sampling

The population is defined as 3,254 and the unit of analysis is Thai skilled workforces in Malaysia. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), when population is between 3,001–3,500, the sample size will be determined by 346 samples. Therefore, the sample size in this study is 346 respondents among those Thai skilled workforces in Malaysia. Probability Sampling Technique (Simple Random Sampling) is used as a sampling technique in this study.

4.2 Data Collection

In this study, an online survey method was conducted among Thai skilled workforces in Malaysia during May 2021–July 2021. The online questionnaire was sent through Facebook page and Line group of Thai community in Malaysia (Name of the group: Thai Expats in Malaysia). Due to the time and cost limitation of present study, the study needs to be carried at a single point in time hence this present study was considered as a cross-sectional study. While Thai skilled workforces in Malaysia will be taken as unit of analysis and the responses of each individual are considered as a data source in this study.

4.3 Techniques of Data Analysis

In this study, data on the demographic characteristics is analysed by using descriptive statistics. The correlation analysis, and multiple regression techniques were used to investigate the relationship between economic factor, and socio-cultural factor towards international migration intention among Thai skilled workforces in Malaysia. The data was analysed using the “Statistical Package for the SocialSciences” or SPSS.

4.4 Research Instrument

4.4.1 Content Validity Test

This study conducts Content Validity Test (Index of Item Objective Congruence, IOC) approach which developed by Rovinelli & Hambleton in 1977 to indicate the experts evaluate on the degree to which the content of the questionnaire item is measuring the intended objective of the study (Turner & Carlson, 2003). For this study, there were 3 experts in management field who had evaluated on questionnaire item; the total value of IOC for each questionnaire item in this study was between 0.67-1.00 which was over than 0.5, therefore the instrument is considered being valid.

4.4.2 Reliability Test

The Cronbach's alpha of each factor were Economic (0.79), Socio-Cultural (0.86), and Workforces' Migration Intention (0.83). Internal reliability analysis was tested for each of the three factors and the measurement of variables in this study were reliable. Reliability estimates Cronbach's coefficient alpha ranged from 0.79 to 0.86. All three factors showed 0.79 and above level of reliability for measuring internal consistency, indicating that the three factors were internally consistent enough to produce valuable data (George & Mallery, 2003).

4.4.3 Normality Test

The skewness index range was from -0.533 to 0.131 and the kurtosis index range was from 0.450 to 0.261. The data is considered being normal for the range of skewness from -2 to +2 (Hair et al., 2010) and kurtosis from -7 to +7 (Hair et al., 2010). Hence, this can be concluded that the collected data were normal distributed as both the skewness and kurtosis index of 24 items presented are within the normal distribution range as suggested.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Results

5.1.1 Results on Demographic Characteristics

The summary of the demographic compositions of the respondents are shown in Table 3. Descriptive analysis of demographic information indicated that most of the respondents were female with the percentage of 69.7% while 30.3% were male. The age groups were 44.5% with age between 23 to 30 years old, 26.9% with age between 31 to 35 years, and 20.8% with age 36 to 40 years old. Most of the respondents were single (67.1%). Based on the education background, most of them were first degree holders (70.2%) followed by 23.7% of master degree. The majority of monthly salary is between RM5,001 or above (63%), 21.7% earn between RM4,001-RM5,000, and 12.4 % earn between RM3,001–RM4,000. 60.4% of the respondents indicated 1-5 years of working experience in Malaysia. Most of the respondents who were categorized with working experiences of 1-5 years were 60.4%, 6-10 years were 24.6%. Most of the respondents are attached in Technology, Information & Communications sector (32.7%), 17.3% in Financial Services sector, 14.2% Energy & Utilities sector. In addition, 63.3% of the respondents under permanent of employment status, 33.8% of the respondents working under long term contract. Most of them serve as office worker (82.1%), and 11.3% being a supervisor with subordinates.

Table 3 Demographic Statistics

Variable	Category	N	Percentage
Gender	Male	105	30.30
	Female	241	69.70
	Total	346	100.00
Age	23-30	154	44.50
	31-35	93	26.90
	36-40	72	20.80
	41-45	15	4.30
	46-50	10	2.90
	51 or above	2	0.60
	Total	346	100.00

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Table 3 Demographic Statistics (Continued)

Variable	Category	N	Percentage
Marital Status	Single	232	67.00
	Married	113	32.70
	Divorced	1	0.30
	Total	346	100.00
Education	Diploma or below	16	4.60
	First degree	243	70.20
	Master degree	82	23.70
	Doctoral degree	5	1.40
	Total	346	100.00
Duration of Employment	Less than 1 year	9	2.60
	1-5 years	209	60.40
	6-10 years	85	24.60
	11-15 years	41	11.80
	16-20 years	2	0.60
	Total	346	100.00
Salary	RM2,001 – RM3,000	10	2.90
	RM3,001 – RM4,000	43	12.40
	RM4,001 – RM5,000	75	21.70
	RM5,001 or above	218	63.00
	Total	346	100.00
Organization Sector	Consumer Industrial Products and Services	38	11.00
	Financial Services	60	17.30
	Technology, Information & Communications	113	32.70
	Professional Services (i.e. Architect, Lawyer, Consultant)	15	4.30
	Government Sector	6	1.70
	Energy & Utilities	49	14.20
	Tourism Industry	17	4.90

Table 3 Demographic Statistics (Continued)

Variable	Category	N	Percentage
Organization Sector (Continued)	Medical Industry	6	1.70
	E-commerce	16	4.60
	Business Outsource Processing	20	5.80
	Logistics	6	1.70
	Total	346	100.00
Employment Status	Permanent	219	63.30
	Long term contract (1 year and above)	117	33.80
	Short term contract (less than 1 year)	2	0.60
	Non-contract casual	3	0.90
	Self-employment	5	1.40
	Total	346	100.00
Position Level	Management level	18	5.20
	Supervisor with subordinates	39	11.30
	Office worker	284	82.10
	Self-employment	5	1.40
	Total	346	100.00

5.1.2 Results on the Relationships Between Economic, Socio-Cultural, and Workforces' Migration Intention

This session shows the results on the relationship between economic factor, and socio-cultural factor toward international migration intention among Thai skilled workforces in Malaysia by using Correlation Analysis and Multiple Regression Analysis.

1) Correlation Analysis

Table 4 shows the relationships between Economic, Socio-Cultural, and Workforces' Migration Intention. Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to describe the strength of the relationship between two variables (Cohen, 1988). The values of the correlation coefficients (r) indicate the strength of the relationship between variables. The results showed that there was a moderate positive correlation between Economic factor and Workforces' Migration Intention ($r = 0.324$, $p < 0.01$). The positive correlation between Socio-Cultural and Workforces' Migration Intention was also moderate ($r = 0.390$ and $p < 0.01$).

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Table 4 Results of Correlation Analysis

Variables	1	2	3
Economic	1.00		
Socio-Cultural	0.575**	1.00	
Workforces' Migration Intention	0.324**	0.390**	1.00

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

2) Multiple Regression Analysis

The multiple regression model with all predictors produced $R^2 = .167$, $F = 34.319$, $p < 0.05$. As the following Table 5, the study found that Economic, and Socio-Cultural were positively significant predictors towards Workforces' Migration Intention ($P < 0.05$). The study also found that Socio-Cultural was the highest impact (Beta = 0.304), the results demonstrate that Language dimension had the highest level of influence on workforces' migration (Beta = 0.413, $t = 8.411$, $p < 0.05$). While Economic was the lower impact (Beta = 0.149) towards workforces' migration Intention. However, only Cost of Living dimension was found insignificant toward workforces' migration. The finding also indicated the Durbin-Watson statistic with 1.776 which represents the positive serial correlation.

Table 5 Results of Multiple Regression Analysis

Variables	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t-value	Sig.
Socio-Cultural:	0.304	5.046	0.000
- Society	0.359	7.138	0.000
- Culture	0.366	7.290	0.000
- Religion	0.289	5.598	0.000
- Language	0.413	8.411	0.000
- Environment	0.237	4.528	0.000
Economic:	0.149	2.478	0.014
- Wage	0.188	3.549	0.000
- Labour Market	0.408	8.281	0.000
- Economic Growth	0.355	7.047	0.000
- Cost of Living	0.062	1.153	0.250

Sig. = 0.05

5.2 Discussion

Based on the first research objective, to study the demographic characteristics among Thai skilled workforces in Malaysia. The study showed the demographic characteristics among Thai skilled workforces in Malaysia that most of Thai skilled workforces who work in Malaysia are attached in Technology, Information & Communications industry, most of them are young people aged 23-30 years old, working for 1-5 years' experiences and earn more than RM5,000/month. The study of Promsaka Na Sakolnakorn (2019) showed that Malaysia is one of the most frequent destinations for Thai migrant workforces because employees' wage is considered higher than working in Thailand. The results of the study also showed that most of the Thai skilled workforces who having a job offer in Malaysia hold acceptable qualifications, professional qualifications, or specialist skills.

For the second research objective, to investigate the relationship between economic factor towards international migration intention among Thai skilled workforces in Malaysia. The study showed that Economic factor was impact towards Workforces' Migration Intention, even though Economic factor was the lower impact ($\text{Beta} = 0.149$) towards workforces' migration Intention compared to Socio-Cultural factor.

The economic growth in a more globalized world has strengthened the role of international migration in the economy of Malaysia. Because of its relatively successful and stable economy, Malaysia has drawn a huge number of talented labour migrants from neighbouring countries seeking a higher quality of life, working in several industry sectors such as Technology, Information & Communications, Financial Service, Energy & Utilities, and Consumer Industrial Products and Services. Their presence indicates Malaysia's economic prosperity, which gives greater pay and better job opportunities (Gentile, 2019).

This is consistent to the recent study of Hamzah et al. (2020) showed that the career mobility of foreigners in Malaysia is due to economic development, the difference in wage rates, high demand from various sectors, and also socio-cultural factors.

And the third research objective, to investigate the relationship between socio-cultural factor towards international migration intention among Thai skilled workforces in Malaysia. The study found that Socio-Cultural was the highest impact ($\text{Beta} = 0.304$), the results demonstrate that Language dimension had the highest level of influence on workforces' migration ($\text{Beta} = 0.413$, $t = 8.411$, $p < 0.05$).

The results of studies showed that people move for different reasons. These differences have an influence on the global migration process. The study showed that socio-cultural factor was the highest impact towards migration intention among Thai skilled workforces. It shows that social

factor tends to go along with increasing of the number of international migration. In particular, social and cultural characteristics of migrants from Thailand southern border provinces and Malaysia are related, particularly in terms of Islam and Malay language practices. As the study of Jampaklay et al. (2017) found out that most of Thai workforces in Malaysia who shared the same culture and belief as Malaysian people are from southern border provinces of Thailand, this shows that a common socio-culture and way of life between origin and destination countries have been one of the significant factors toward international migration. However, workforce migration to the country of destination were mainly related to the family and friends' networks to get better job opportunities, higher pay, career growth, and also international working experience.

As a country of destination, Malaysia plays an important role in international migration in the South-East Asia region. Its position as a middle-income country, sharing three land borders with Brunei, Indonesia, and Thailand. Its openness to exchange of international investment, and trade with other countries which has resulted in large flows of international migration (Jordaan, 2018).

6. Conclusion

The movement among workforces across international boundaries may be inspiring, as it seeks better job opportunities, escape poverty while others escape political conflicts or environmental disasters. This study intends to study the demographic characteristics among Thai skilled workforces in Malaysia, to investigate the relationship between economic factor, and socio-cultural factors toward international migration intention among Thai skilled workforces in Malaysia.

The descriptive analysis of demographic information indicated that most of the respondents were female. The age groups were 44.5% with age between 23 to 30 years old. Most of the respondents were single. Based on the education background, most of the respondents were first degree holders. The majority of monthly salary is between RM5,001 or above. Most of the respondents indicated 1-5 years of working experience in Malaysia. The results of this study also showed that most of Thai skilled workforces who work in Malaysia are attached in Technology, Information & Communications sector.

The multiple regression analysis showed that Economic, and Socio-Cultural were positively significant predictors towards Workforces' Migration Intention. The study also found that Socio-Cultural was the highest impact (Beta = 0.304), the results demonstrate that Language dimension had the highest level of influence on workforces' migration. While Economic was the lower impact (Beta

= 0.149) towards workforces' migration Intention. This shows that Thai skilled workforces in Malaysia are attracted by a higher share of same-type of social and culture in the destination country.

7. RECOMMENDATION

7.1 Recommendations for Research

This study was narrowly focused on skilled workforces' perspective. However, there are other perceptions which include unskilled and semi-skilled workforces who work in Malaysia. Therefore, the results of the study cannot be generalized to represent all the perspectives of Thai workforces. In order to further the understanding of workforce migration intention, new studies should attempt to cover a wide range of workforces and employment by industry sector.

7.2 Recommendations for Future Research

It is recommended for future studies that can address the same research context in a different area, and recommended to conduct a qualitative research in order to get more in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the specific details. The study believes that by conducting a qualitative investigation which uses personal in-depth interviews procedure, it will encourage respondents to share more of their personal insights in order to gather a more meaningful investigation in an area of study.

7.3 Recommendations for Policy and Practice

The results of this present study contribute to the literature by enhancing the understanding of workforces' migration intention especially within the context of Thailand – Malaysia. Specifically, this study could offer important policy for ministry of labour who seeks to understand international labour migration among Thai workforces.

As the results of this study shown with better understanding of opportunities and income available in Malaysia, Thai skilled workforces are attracted to job markets in foreign countries which lead Thailand faces the detrimental effects of brain drain. Therefore, to increase job availability in all areas of Thailand is a major challenge which the Thai government should be addressing because Thailand has a huge number of skilled workforces who work abroad.

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