

THE ANALYSIS OF FEMALE MIGRANT WORKERS' MOBILITY TOWARDS DOMESTIC ECONOMY OF EAST JAVA

Grisvia Agustin(1), Imam Mukhlis (2), Yogi Dwi Satrio (3), Dian Rachmawati (4),
Syahrul Munir (5)
Economics Faculty of Universitas Negeri Malang,
E-mail : grisvia.agustin.fe@um.ac.id

Abstract

Nowadays, women taking part to support family prosperity by working is something common. This research purpose is to analyze the supporting factors and the obstacles to the mobility of female migrant workers. The model used in this research is the interactive model (Miles and Huberman, 2005). The object of this research is female migrant workers from Blitar and Tulungagung Regency in the Province of East Java. The data collection method is gradual data collection; data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verifying. The result gives the conclusion that the main factor of the mobility of migrant female workers in those areas is the economic factor. Later, it is also supported by the existence of economic disparities and the low wage rate in the area of origin while family needs keep rising. On the other hand, the destination countries for the female migrant workers such as Taiwan, Saudi Arabia, and Hong Kong offer high wage rate for unskilled workers.

Keywords: Female Migrant Workers, Workers' Mobility, Domestic Economy

Background

Nowadays, women go to work to support family prosperity isn't something unusual. Women of the 21st century are not only being a housewife but also going to work helping their husband earn a living. Women have some potentials which are relatively equal to men's in terms of intellectualism, personal abilities, and skills. The female migrant workers working in manufactories today are facing critical issues.

The urge for a better family living makes many village women go leaving their husbands, children, and parents to make money overseas. This migration theoretically is a critical decision that could affect their family prosperity, the community they live in, and the whole economic activities there (Azam and Gubert, 2006). However, their effort isn't supported

by decent knowledge and understanding about the general requirements and procedures to work overseas. They don't know the risks that might happen in every level of placement when they are about to work in foreign countries. They also don't know their rights and responsibilities of any parties engaged in the placement process as regulated in Law Number 39 of 2004. This condition makes female migrant workers susceptible to every kind of exploitations, such economical, physical, or psychological when working overseas.

In the end of 1970s, the major destination country for Indonesian female migrant workers was Saudi Arabia to meet the demands of domestic jobs. During the 1990s, the destination was shifted to the South

East Asia and Pacific nations. The shift happened because government opened employment in those nations. In this case, the mobility of female migrant workers to work as housemaids in the Middle East and Pacific countries was a reality that needed attention from all parties. In

addition, during 2013 to 2014, the number of migrant workers departure was declined as there were many problems occurred to Indonesian female migrant workers overseas. The number of female migrant workers in East Java Province is shown in the table below:

Table 1.1 The Number of Female Migrant Workers from Blitar, Malang, Tulungagung, Kediri, dan Nganjuk

Regency	2013	2014
Malang	8.028	6.433
Blitar	6.985	6.029
Tulungagung	4.337	4.160
Kediri	3.523	3.108
Trenggalek	1.885	1.716
Nganjuk	1.625	910

Source: Data Processing and Presentation Department (PUSLTFO BNP2TKI)

According to data from BNP2TKI (National Agency for Placement and Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers), Malang Regency is the area that distributes 6,433 female workers in 2014. It is declined 19.86% from the number in 2013. Blitar Regency has 6,029 female migrant workers and it is declined 13.68% from the number in 2013. Tulungagung Regency has 4,160 female migrant workers, Kediri has 3,108 female migrant workers, Trenggalek Regency has 1,716 female migrant workers, while Nganjuk Regency has 910 female migrant workers in 2014. As a conclusion, the year 2013 to 2014 saw the declining number of female migrant workers going overseas. In fact, those regencies at that time couldn't provide

jobs for the female workforce available. Relating to the prior explanations, the purpose of this research is to analyze the factors affecting the rising number of female migrant workers sent overseas in East Java Province.

Theoretical Review

According to Article 1 section (1) Law number 39 of 2004 on the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers, Indonesian Migrant Worker is every citizen of Indonesia who fulfills the requirements to work overseas in working relations for the particular time period and receives payment. While Article 1 in the Ministerial Decree of Indonesian Minister of

Manpower No Kep104/Men/2002 on the placement of the migrant workers states that Indonesian Migrant Worker is man or woman who works overseas in particular time period based on employment agreement through the procedures of Indonesian migrant workers placement. Those regulations are the foundation of the management of Indonesian workers who will work overseas.

The roles of the workforce in national development have been discussed in many theories. Adam Smith (1729 – 1790) is the major theorist on this field from the classical economic school of thought. This school's theory of economic development states the importance of workforce and capital for the development. After economic growth happens, the accumulation of new capital (physical) is needed and Smith believes that the allocation of effective human resources is the starter to keep the economic growth. In other words, the effective allocation of human resources is a necessary condition for economic growth.

John Maynard Keynes (1883 – 1946) argues that in reality, the market of the workforce doesn't fit the classical view. In any given place, workers always have labor union which on the behalf of the labors will fight against wage reduction. Even if the wage can be reduced, which Keynes believes the chance is very slim, then the community wage rate will also get down. Reducing the wage of some elements of the community will also reduce community's

purchasing power which eventually will reduce the total consumptions.

The workforce issues are relevant to the production cost of the company. Price fluctuation of the goods will make the companies face some difficulties to determine the production cost. In this case, determining the wage might also create some turmoils which can be disruptive to the national economic stability. Raising the wage will raise the production cost so that the price of the goods will also raise. If the unit price sold to the costumers raises, usually public will react by reducing the purchase or even stopping the purchase. This condition creates the change in production scale called production scale effect which forces companies to decrease the production volume of the goods and later they also might be forced to fire some workers.

In such dynamic conditions, migration holds important roles toward economic, social, and cultural situation which have sort of different implications to the development (Ratha, 2007). According to Van der Mensbrugge and Roland-Holst (2009), migration can be beneficial for both the origin country and the destination country. However, the mobility of Indonesian workforce to go overseas also creates family, socio-cultural, and psychological problems (D'Emilio, et al., 2007; Kahn, et al., 2003). The migration of the workforce to go overseas will happen if there is a great disparity between the rate of domestic and overseas wage. This migration also creates the shifting

productivity of the workforce from the origin country to the destination country overseas.

Research Methods

This research is a qualitative research with descriptive data analysis method. This research describes various facts, data, and phenomena happen. The data used are primary data such as livelihood, level of education, and the number of dependent families. The object of this research is the Indonesian workforce who work overseas. The population of the research is Indonesian workers (female workers) who work overseas (Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea). The sample of the research is taken by conducting interviews and giving questionnaires. Due to the large number and the coverage of female migrant workers in East Java Province, the researcher clusters them using the technique of multistage cluster sampling to the female migrant workers. The sampling process of every stage is done by purposive sampling method; a sampling technique which prioritizes the purpose of the research than the nature of the population (Burhan, 2011:125). Using this method means the sample is supposed to have such criteria such as particular destination country, working overseas through legal migrant worker agency, and having a permanent job in the destination country. The area of those female migrant workers is Blitar and Tulungagung Regency.

The data analysis method of this research is that of Miles and

Huberman (2005) called interactive model analysis. The data analysis is done simultaneously with the data collecting process through the steps of data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verifying.

Discussions

From the questionnaire given to the female migrant workers family in Blitar and Tulungagung, it is gained 12 answered questionnaires. The result of the questionnaire is as follows:

- ✓ The destination countries are Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Saudi Arabia
- ✓ How family members communicate with the female migrant workers overseas
- ✓ Most of them communicate more than once in a week
- ✓ They communicate through mobile phone
- ✓ About the topics being discussed with the female migrant workers
- ✓ Most of them don't discuss the number of remittances
- ✓ Half of them discuss the methods of receiving remittance, half of them don't
- ✓ Most of them talk about the purpose of savings
- ✓ They discuss money management
- ✓ Almost all of them have financial goals
- ✓ The financial purpose is decided by the female migrant workers themselves

- ✓ Most of them haven't decided the amount of money for savings yet
- ✓ The family financial goals consist of meals, educational costs, investment, household essentials, house renovation, and Umrah (pilgrimage to Mecca)
- ✓ Remittance from female migrant workers ranges from Rp1,000,000 to Rp42,000,000
- ✓ Total family income per month is from Rp3,000,000 to Rp11,000,000
- ✓ Spending for meals is from Rp150,000 to Rp1,000,000
- ✓ Most of them (eight respondents) haven't arranged their financial budget in the last 6 months, they just write cash records for expenditure.
- ✓ The use of remittance: decided by the female workers themselves (4 respondents), by the respondent himself/herself (1 respondent), by both respondents and the female migrant workers (3 respondents), and by others (3 respondents).

Based on the data above, it can be described that causative factor that makes female migrant workers willing to go working overseas is the educational costs of their children. This factor is also the main motivation for the female migrant workers to work overseas. This condition is in line with the theory of employment that states the factors of someone working overseas are the likes of economic factor and demographical

characteristics of developing country. Todaro and Smith (2009) believe that there are some factors that make migration happen:

- ✓ The economic factor is the main factor that makes people migrate. People who don't make enough money in their area of origin since they don't possess sufficient skills try to go out of their area to find a job which potentially makes more money than the job they do in their area of origin.
- ✓ Demographical characteristics of a developing country mean most of the citizens are in their productive age. If those in their productive age have no opportunity to work in their area of origin, the tendency to migrate is getting higher.

There are some factors that interest and support individuals to migrate. On the other hand, there are also factors that inhibit individuals to migrate. Some of them are the costs of transportation and the distance between the area of origin and area of destination. The first factor is stated in questionnaire results that the remittance sent by female migrant workers is spent to pay the costs of transportation to their migrant worker agency in their area of origin.

The supporting factors to migrate are that people can't find a job in their area of origin, the high poverty level, etc. Other factors that make people get interested to go working in the area of destination are the industrial developments, better commerce, service, transportation, and education. The better economic level an area has, the higher level of

attractiveness it has. The economic disparity between the area of origin and the area of destination makes individuals more likely do migration since the main factor to migrate is the economic motive. By migrating, the migrants hopefully can make better money than the amount they can make in their area of origin.

It is proven by the description of the questionnaire above that the main factor of the mobility of the female migrant workers in Blitar and Tulungagung is the economic factor. One of the supporting factors is the typical condition of a developing country which has an economic disparity between its people. The other supporting factor is the low wage rate in the area of origin while there are so many family needs that have to meet. Besides, major destination countries for Indonesian migrant workers such as Taiwan, Arab Saudi, and Hong Kong are countries that offer a high wage for the unskilled workforce. From their transportation and public facilities they own, those countries are often considered modern country. All of those things make the mobility of the unskilled migrant female workers from Blitar and Tulungagung get higher.

While the main factors that inhibit the mobility of female migrant workers of Blitar and Tulungagung are family, education, and economic prosperity. The family has the biggest cultural impact towards Javanese women. When those women are entertaining the notion about working overseas, regardless their family economic condition, if they have a

husband, then they have to obey their husband's decision. If they haven't married yet, then the Javanese women have to obey their parents. So if they have decided to work overseas, then the decision must have been affected by their family.

The result of this research is in line with the research results of D'Emilio, et al., (2007) and Kahn, et al., (2003). Many problems are caused by the migration of the workers overseas. There are social and cultural issues happen to family and area they leave behind. Those problems happen when women as mother and housewife who are responsible for their children and husband can't fully do their roles. The social and cultural value of family and community will be shifted when the roles of the mother are missing. Based on field observations, this situation can make their children refuse to go to school, their behaviors become uncontrolled, and they pay less respect to their parents. The research of Yanovich (2015) in Moldova and Ukraine concludes that family problems will happen whenever women who are married and having children go to work overseas. In this case, those women become less attentive towards their children. The children become less motivated in school and it results to the decline of educational level. In few cases, it results in child crime. The result of this research also supports the results of Giannelli and Mangiavacchi's (2010) research that migration of workers who are parents can give negative effect towards the school

attendance of their children in Albania.

Conclusions

Based on the analysis and descriptions above, it can be concluded that:

- ✓ The main factor of the mobility of female migrant workers in Blitar and Tulungagung is the economic factor. Then, it is supported by the typical condition of a developing country which has economic disparity. Next, it is also supported by the low wage in the area of origin while there are many family needs to meet. Besides, the destination countries for the female migrant workers such as Taiwan, Arab Saudi, and Hong Kong have a high level of attractiveness. Those are also countries that offer high wage rate for the unskilled workforce.
- ✓ The factors that inhibit the mobility of female migrant workers in Blitar and Tulungagung are family, education, and economic prosperity.

Suggestions that can be given based on the results of this research are as follows:

- ✓ The importance of education, especially for women so they can possess both hard and soft skills needed to take part in economic activities in the home country.

- ✓ The understanding of the family members, especially the women, that going to work doesn't necessarily mean leaving their family behind is strongly needed.
- ✓ The participation of local government's social welfare and manpower department to inform the community about the consequences of working overseas as it means they have to leave their family behind and also the risk of cultural clash they might face overseas.

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