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Beyond Remittances: A Holistic Framework Of Migrant Workers' Resilience From Pre-Departure Psychology To Family Coping Mechanisms

Amiruddin

Faculty of Law, Universitas Islam Sultan Agung, Semarang, Indonesia, E-mail: amirkresna43@gmail.com

Abstract. *Migrant workers represent a structurally vulnerable demographic susceptible to transnational labor exploitation, psychological distress, and economic shocks that reverberate back to their origin countries. While global labor migration research predominantly evaluates the economic impact of remittances linearly, this study proposes an integrated, multi-phase framework of migrant resilience. Employing a comprehensive desk-based analytical approach synthesizing socio-economic, psychological, and institutional datasets from Indonesian migrant workers (PMI), this paper maps the migrant journey across three critical phases: pre-departure, host-country penplacement, and left-behind family survival. The analysis reveals that psychological readiness—specifically fostered through Group Positive Psychotherapy—serves as a vital baseline to mitigate pre-departure anxiety. Upon placement, the financial optimization of remittances is heavily dependent on the workers' localized living costs, educational backgrounds, and the safety nets provided by institutionalized Islamic philanthropy (e.g., Dompot Dhuafa), which redefines traditional tenets to shelter exploited workers. Finally, the study examines how structural remittance delays force left-behind families to deploy active, passive, and network-driven coping strategies to survive. Consequently, this paper argues that international labor policies must transcend mere legal-repressive frameworks, shifting toward a holistic protection ecosystem that synchronizes psychological capital, financial literacy, and transnational social support.*

Keywords: *Capital; Mechanisms; Migration; Psychological; Transnational.*

1. Introduction

Transnational labor migration is a multi-layered global phenomenon that triggers profound macroeconomic, sociological, and psychological repercussions, impacting not only the

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individual workers but also reshaping the structural survival of their families in home countries. As actors operating within unfamiliar socio-cultural and legal frameworks, migrant workers occupy a highly vulnerable socio-economic position, necessitating comprehensive, continuous, and multi-sectoral protection. Within contemporary discourse, migrant welfare should no longer be narrowly interpreted through a purely economic lens or linear remittance figures. Instead, it must encompass systemic preventive mental-health frameworks before departure, robust institutionalized safety nets during foreign placement, and sustainable domestic coping strategies for families left behind. Consequently, any scholarly evaluation of transnational labor protection must be structured holistically, integrating the psychological, socio-religious, and financial realities of the migration cycle.

As a major labor-sending country, Indonesia has established various normative legal and institutional instruments to safeguard its Pekerja Migran Indonesia (PMI). However, despite these formal statutory mechanisms, a distinct and worrying discrepancy remains between regulatory ideals (law in the books) and the lived realities of migrants (law in action). One of the most critical yet neglected areas is the pre-departure phase, where an overwhelming majority of female candidate migrants (76.40%) endure acute anxiety, emotional confusion, and severe isolation due to impending transnational separation. Without structural psychological interventions—such as Group Positive Psychotherapy—to instill optimism and cognitive resilience, these workers face advanced vulnerabilities before even arriving at their destinations

Furthermore, during the placement phase in destination hubs like Hong Kong or Malaysia, migrants confront highly volatile socioeconomic environments. While financial remittances serve as a critical proxy for migrant welfare, empirical data shows that the volume of money sent home is strictly constrained by surging localized living costs, education levels, and heavy initial agency debt deductions. In times of acute crisis—such as unilateral contract terminations, physical abuse, or systemic legal exploitation—formal state protection often moves too slowly. In response, transnational civil society and contemporary Islamic philanthropic organizations (e.g., Dompot Dhuafa) have stepped in to bridge this structural gap. By progressively reinterpreting traditional Islamic tenets like Ibnu Sabil (marooned travelers) and Riqab (shackled individuals), these organizations provide emergency shelters, legal advocacy, and psychosocial rehabilitation for distressed migrants.

The socio-economic shocks experienced by workers abroad inevitably echo back to their origin villages. Due to institutional deductions, fluctuating health conditions, or banking delays, the remittance stream received by families at home is frequently irregular and unpredictable. This financial volatility forces left-behind households to continuously innovate localized survival

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tactics:

1. Active Strategies: Wives or families taking immediate secondary informal employment (e.g., small-scale trading, tailoring) to cover daily gaps.
2. Passive Strategies: Drastically reducing household consumption and altering dietary qualities (e.g., substituting fresh fish with salted fish) to lower daily expenditure.
3. Network-Driven Strategies: Securing informal emergency loans from extended family webs and leveraging state welfare assistance

While existing international literature extensively investigates labor migration, it remains deeply fragmented—treating psychological readiness, remittance econometrics, transnational religious philanthropy, and household economics as isolated academic domains. A significant literature gap persists regarding how these four dimensions interact dynamically across the migration lifecycle

To resolve this limitation, this paper integrates these distinct phases into a unified conceptual framework. The discussion focuses on analyzing the pre-departure psychological capital of migrants, the econometric and institutional determinants of their welfare abroad, and the resultant socioeconomic coping behaviors of left-behind families, ultimately offering a holistic blueprint for substantive transnational labor protection

2. Research Methods

This study adopts a qualitative, desk-based research methodology, integrating both a systemic-conceptual approach and a socio-economic trajectory analysis to investigate the multi-phase resilience cycle of Indonesian migrant workers (PMI). Unlike traditional restrictive legal or purely econometric frameworks, this paper utilizes an integrative review method to decode complex, cross-sectoral datasets across three distinct migration phases: pre-departure, host-country placement, and post-placement family survival. The data operationalized in this research were gathered from primary academic literatures, empirical field reports, and localized case studies addressing Indonesian labor migration dynamics, which are systematically categorized into four foundational pillars: Psychological Capital Data: Empirical metrics evaluating pre-departure anxiety and the efficacy of Group Positive Psychotherapy among female candidate migrants. Transnational Institutional Data: Qualitative records detailing the structural shift of Islamic philanthropic frameworks (e.g., Dompot Dhuaafa) and emergency shelter networks in major destination hubs like Hong Kong. Econometric Remittance Data: Statistical and phenomenological indicators determining how income, domestic dependencies,

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and localized living costs dictate the net volume of transnational money transfers. Household Survival Data: Socio-economic field evidence mapping the active, passive, and network-driven coping mechanisms deployed by left-behind families facing irregular financial inflows. The gathered materials were evaluated using a qualitative descriptive-analytical technique combined with thematic lifecycle mapping. First, the data were subjected to matrix categorization to separate individual worker vulnerabilities from structural institutional gaps. Second, cross-sectoral triangulation was executed to assess how a failure or success in one phase (e.g., pre-departure psychological intervention) directly correlates with downstream outcomes (e.g., host-country economic management and left-behind family stability). This systematic synthesis allows the study to move beyond isolated case analyses, yielding an objective, universally applicable conceptual model that aligns with international standards of substantive labor welfare and transnational protection policy.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Pre-Departure Structural Vulnerabilities and the Building of Psychological Capital

The transnational migration trajectory of Indonesian migrant workers (PMI) is systematically plagued by deep-seated vulnerabilities long before the physical border crossing occurs. Empirically, the pre-departure phase represents a highly volatile emotional period, with data indicating that a striking 76.40% of female candidate migrants experience pronounced psychological distress characterized by acute anxiety, internal confusion, and systemic loneliness. Conversely, a mere 2% of these individuals approach their impending deployment with an optimal baseline of structural optimism. This widespread psychological instability is fundamentally rooted in the socio-economic profiles of the candidates, who are predominantly low-educated individuals originating from rural agricultural backgrounds, forced into the global labor market as a rational choice to escape chronic domestic poverty.

To counter this systemic fragility, this study argues that the state's protective framework must transcend purely administrative and legal-repressive measures, shifting instead toward proactive human-capital optimization. The execution of Group Positive Psychotherapy serves as a vital structural intervention during the pre-departure training phase. By systematically implementing a tripartite therapeutic model—focusing on pleasant life (reconciling and accepting past life events), engaged life (identifying and utilizing personal strengths), and the pursuit of meaning (reconceptualizing immediate migration challenges as positive milestones)—this intervention alters the psychological trajectory of the workers.

The statistical and qualitative validation of this psychotherapeutic approach demonstrates a

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significant escalation in the workers' optimism[cite: 24]. Cultivating this specific form of psychological capital is an indispensable requirement to shield migrants from developing secondary mental complications or maladaptive behaviors when navigating the procedural stress of foreign environments. Ultimately, an optimistic cognitive framework functions as a stabilizing baseline, directly dictating how successfully a migrant worker adapts to foreign workplace pressures and handles the complex financial responsibilities of the placement phase.

3.2. Host-Country Placement Dynamics: Econometric Determinants of Remittances and Transnational Philanthropic Protections

Upon entering the host-country ecosystem, the welfare of the migrant worker shifts into a dynamic interplay between econometric realities and structural social support networks. Within contemporary migration literature, financial remittances sent to the origin country serve as a direct proxy for evaluating the overall well-being and economic success of the migrant. However, this study underscores that the generation of remittances is non-linear and highly contingent upon specific localized independent variables

Empirical regression analyses demonstrate that the net volume of remittances is significantly and positively driven by three primary determinants: the migrant's level of education, their foreign income capacity, and the exact number of domestic dependents in the home village. Conversely, a powerful negative determinant is the localized living cost within the destination hub. Interestingly, variables such as age, prior work experience, and high initial recruitment/departure costs exert no statistically significant impact on the long-term remittance trajectory

Furthermore, the spatial and cultural allocation of resources varies drastically based on the migrant's social networks. For instance, micro-level behavioral patterns of Indonesian workers in Hong Kong reveal distinct lifestyle stratifications:

- 1) Victoria Park Cohort: Migrants gathering in this urban center allocate their disposable income primarily toward high-frequency communication tools and domestic traveling/leisure activities
- 2) Masjid Kowloon Cohort: Migrants utilizing religious community spaces allocate their funds predominantly toward modest apparel (e.g., the booming Muslim clothing online trade) and institutionalized professional training or religious organizational memberships.

Beyond standard financial management, the placement phase is routinely disrupted by structural shocks, such as unilateral contract terminations, systemic physical or psychological abuse, and illegal underpayment by exploitative employers. When formal diplomatic avenues

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operate too slowly, transnational civil society and progressive Islamic philanthropic institutions (e.g., Dompot Dhuafa) act as vital alternative safety nets

These institutions have executed a profound, modern theological reinterpretation of traditional Islamic jurisprudence regarding zakat allocation. By expanding the classical categories of Ibnu Sabil (the stranded traveler) and Riqab (the enslaved individual), philanthropy modernizes its mandate to legally cover and structurally empower abused, undocumented, or exploited migrant workers facing modern forms of labor bondage. Funded by the capital pool generated from fortunate migrant workers, these organizations establish emergency shelters (temporary apartments), provide direct legal aid, extend spiritual guidance (da'wah), and operate intensive entrepreneurship academies (Migrant Institute & Rumah Berkah). This dual structure—balancing immediate econometric optimization with robust social-religious defense networks—ensures that the migrant survives systemic crises without succumbing to deep-seated revictimization.

3.3. The Echo at Home: Left-Behind Family Survival and Multidimensional Coping Mechanisms

The economic shocks and structural achievements of the migrant worker abroad directly dictate the socio-economic survival matrix of the household left behind in Indonesia. In an ideal state, continuous remittance inflows elevate family welfare. However, in practical application, field evidence from major sending regions demonstrates that remittance transfers are frequently non-routine, highly irregular, and unpredictable. This systematic financial delay is typically triggered by the worker's fluctuating health conditions, sudden changes in host-country employment status, or prolonged salary deductions mandated by predatory placement agencies.

To bridge these severe financial gaps and maintain structural household order, left-behind families (primarily led by the remaining spouse or extended kin) are forced to continuously deploy three distinct typologies of coping mechanisms:

- 1) Coping Strategy Typology: Specific Field Operations & Actions Deployed by Left-Behind Families
- 2) Active Strategies : Households actively diversify their income by taking immediate, informal localized employment. This includes setting up small-scale grocery kiosks (warung), producing homemade snacks/cakes, or entering the low-tier garment/tailoring trade.
- 3) Passive Strategies : Families initiate drastic internal consumption cutbacks. This directly manifests as altering the quality and quantity of daily food intake—specifically replacing

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premium fresh fish with cheaper salted fish—and postponing non-essential health or domestic expenditures.

4) Network Strategies : Households leverage informal credit webs, securing emergency interest-free loans from extended relatives or neighbors, while concurrently utilizing state welfare safety nets such as subsidized rice distributions and government health insurance.

This structural matrix clearly demonstrates that the domestic survival of left-behind families is not an isolated socioeconomic event. Instead, their everyday resilience at the dinner table is fundamentally bound to the entire transnational migration lifecycle: it is pre-determined by the initial psychological capital and optimism of the migrant worker before departure, heavily dictated by the econometric realities of the host country, and structurally rescued by transnational philanthropic support systems during times of acute crisis. Therefore, achieving substantive justice and genuine welfare within international labor migration requires a paradigm shift—moving away from fragmented legal-repressive frameworks toward an integrated, lifecycle-based protection ecosystem.

4. Conclusion

Based on the multidimensional synthesis of the transnational migration lifecycle, this study concludes that the protection and welfare optimization framework for Indonesian migrant workers (PMI) cannot be achieved through isolated or purely econometric interventions. The structural resilience of migrant workers is a continuous, non-linear phenomenon spanning three interdependent phases: pre-departure, host-country placement, and left-behind family survival. At the baseline, the systemic vulnerability and acute pre-departure anxiety that disproportionately affect candidate migrants can be mitigated by building human and psychological capital, specifically through targeted interventional models like Group Positive Psychotherapy. Cultivating this psychological optimism directly dictates the worker's adaptive capacity and cognitive endurance when encountering foreign labor markets. Furthermore, during the penplacement phase, the financial welfare of the migrant—proxied by remittance optimization—is strictly bounded by localized variables, where higher education, increased income, and family dependencies positively drive transfers, while host-country living costs severely deplete them. When institutional cracks or labor exploitations occur abroad, contemporary transnational Islamic philanthropy (e.g., Dompot Dhuafa) fills the enforcement vacuum by progressively reinterpreting traditional jurisprudence to deliver vital legal aid, shelters, and rehabilitation programs.

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Finally, because remittance flows are frequently non-routine and highly unpredictable due to systemic agency and workplace shocks, left-behind households in Indonesia act as resilient economic agents by deploying active income diversification, passive consumption cutbacks, and informal network loan strategies to survive. Ultimately, this paper argues that establishing substantive justice and real socioeconomic security for migrant families requires an integrated paradigm shift that structurally connects the individual worker's psychological state, transnational social networks, and localized family survival mechanisms.

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