

Indonesian Students' Mental Health in Taiwan: A Comparison of School-Age Students' and Indonesian Migrant Workers' Mental Health

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ABSTRACT

Spirituality and empathy significantly impact many Indonesian migrant laborers in Taiwan are experiencing mental health issues, highlighting the importance of focusing on this aspect. Non-formal education provides both migrant workers and Indonesian children in Taiwan with suitable educational opportunities. Indonesian students studying in Taiwan: their mental health is analyzed and compared in this research. The study differentiates between students of school age and adult migrant workers studying in Taiwan. Utilizing a case study approach, the research involved seven student participants. The findings indicate that school-age students exhibit good mental health. Conversely, Indonesian migrant workers who are students face numerous challenges in non-formal education. They experience higher levels of stress, struggle to adhere to the learning schedule, frequently miss classes, and consequently, do not achieve optimal learning outcomes. The study also identified some students with autism who receive a specialized curriculum to ensure equal educational opportunities (Selvaprabu et al., 2024). These autistic students appear more disciplined and achieve their learning objectives, although at a slower pace. The research suggests implementing counseling strategies to motivate Indonesian migrant workers to pursue education and achieve equal learning opportunities. Additionally, there is a need for Taiwanese students to have access to their autonomous curriculum.

1. Introduction

Migrant workers play a crucial role in the national economy, significantly boosting state revenues and economic productivity through substantial remittances. Taiwan is a popular destination for Indonesian migrants. Over 5,000 Indonesian migrant workers in Taiwan are Ship Crews residing in Donggang Port, Pingtung. Additionally, a significant number of Indonesians from its northern shore reside. In addition to migrant workers, a large number of Indonesian students are now obtaining master's and doctoral degrees in Taiwan. These students are often followed by their families and children who find themselves in need of educational assistance (Yolvi et al., 2023). In addition to presenting its own unique set of difficulties, living as a migrant in a different nation may also result in more complicated problems, especially those about mental health. There is a tremendous amount of stress experienced by a significant migrant labor force of Indonesians in Taiwan, particularly ship crew members. This stress stems from various factors, including the demanding nature of their work and discrepancies between their income and the regulations (Fakhri, 2020). (Fitriyah & Djazilan, 2020; Dixon De Silva et al., 2020; Christiana, 2019; Avendano et al., 2020; Fusar-Poli et al., 2020; Santillanes et al., 2020; Saraswati et al., 2020; Kurniasih et al., 2020;) It is vital to preserve mental health to stabilize behavior, emotions, and thoughts through preserving mental health (Hulloli & Venkatesh, 2021). Addressing these mental health issues necessitates collaborative efforts, including the role of education. Many Indonesian migrant workers in Taiwan have minimal educational backgrounds, often lacking a diploma. Ideally, they should undergo screening and receive adequate preparation before becoming migrant workers, but this is often not the case. Approximately 70% of migrant laborers from Indonesia have not attained primary education, 25% have not completed lower secondary education, and just 5% have completed lower secondary education but have not yet finished upper secondary education. Due to their low educational levels, Indonesian migrants are limited in their career prospects, often only able to work as ship crew members without the opportunity to obtain maritime standard certification.

In Taiwan, ship crew personnel are required by certifying authorities to possess a minimum of a high school diploma or an equivalent qualification. Therefore, providing educational opportunities to these workers is essential. Additionally, Indonesian students in Taiwan who have children in addition, they need educational programs and support to enhance the mental well-being of their children (Doris et al., 2023). From the perspective of Indonesian migrant workers (adults), this research looks at Taiwan's non-formal education system's efficacy for enhancing the mental well-being of in-school students in Taiwan. The aim is to offer insights into the situation of Indonesian students in Taiwan, stressing the need to develop an appropriate curriculum to guarantee that they get the best possible education and that they continue to maintain healthy mental health.

2. Methodology

Data Source

Different members of the school community, such as the administration, teachers, parents, and students, all provide information about the mental health of the children. The data that is collected for this study comes from all of these individuals (Onno et al., 2024). Table 1 presents this data, while Table 2 provides a detailed breakdown of The attributes of all participants.

Table 1. The Source of the Data

No	Data Source
1	Headmaster
2	Teachers
3	Students
4	Parents

Table 2. Subjects demographic characteristics

No.	Initial Name	Sex	Age (Year)	Status		Origin	Other Information
				Marriate / No	Worker / Student		
1	S.1	Male	12	-	Student	Jakarta	-
2	S.2	Female	11	-	Student	Jakarta	-
3	S.3	Female	10	Siblings	Student	Aceh	Autism
4	S.4	Male	12	Siblings	Student	Aceh	Autism
5	S.5	Male	30	No	Worker	Cilacap	ABK
6	S.6	Female	25	No	Worker	Cirebon	Caregiver
7	S.7	Female	27	No	Worker	Cilacap	Caregiver

Research Instrument

Most of the strategies of data gathering that are used in this qualitative research is observation, interview protocols, and documentation. When it involves evaluating mental health, the Positive Mental Health (PMH) scale is the major instrument that is applied. This scale has been verified and evaluated for its dependability.

Table 3. Research Instrument

No	Indicators
1	I usually have a relaxed and upbeat attitude.
2	I find life enjoyable.
3	I am content with my life overall.
4	I am generally confident.
5	I am good at taking care of myself.
6	I am doing well both mentally and physically.
7	I think I'm qualified to deal with life's challenges.
8	I like doing a lot of the things I do.
9	I am a composed, well-balanced person.

Data collection

The data collection process involved interviews, observations, and documentation. While interviews were conducted with each participant who contributed to the study, observations were conducted primarily with the individuals who were the topic of the investigation. The procedure began with case

selection, followed by the identification of data collection tools, data analysis, and concluding with the interpretation of the results (refer to Figure 1).

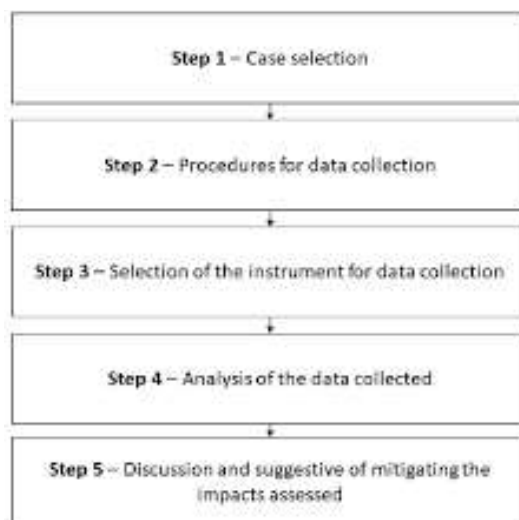


Figure 1. Methods for collecting data

Data analysis

The claims and the justified codes are the main topics of the case study data analysis. The study questions and the interpretation of data from a variety of sources, including interviews, assessments, and records, formed the basis for the development of these assertions.

3. Results and discussion

An overview of the mental health of students in school

According to Brien (2011) and Mujahid (2022), the mental health of school-aged migrant pupils is influenced by the degree to which they can adapt to their surroundings in Taiwan after having earlier resided in Indonesia. This is especially true for students with autism who typically have difficulty interacting with others. School-age students show a strong motivation to continue learning, as demonstrated by their enthusiasm. Both typical and autistic students consistently adhere to their study schedules and generally enjoy life. However, older autistic students tend to have lower self-confidence (Mujahid, 2022; Kenny et al., 2015; Kossyvaki & Papoudi, 2016), whereas other students typically exhibit high levels of self-confidence. In terms of emotions, autistic students often experience less emotional stability, particularly during study periods. This contrasts with typical students, who generally maintain more positive emotions (Hasiana, 2020; Christiana, 2019; Metafisika, 2019; Saraswati et al., 2020; Kamilah et al., 2020; Muhammad et al., 2023). Autistic students also face greater challenges in handling daily issues compared to their typical peers (Salter et al., 2016; Abraham et al., 2020).

An overview of the mental health of Indonesian workers

Migrant workers from Indonesia, the majority of whom are members of ship crews, are responsible for operating ship engines and navigation equipment, and ensuring their proper functioning throughout their voyages. This demanding workload can lead to prolonged fatigue, which may trigger conflicts and impact the mental health of the crew. Frequent disputes often escalate into fights, putting the crew's physical and mental well-being at risk (Afridah et al., 2023; Darimis et al., 2022; Afridah et al., 2023; Fitriyah et al., 2021, 2022; Halida et al., 2022; Fitriyah et al., 2021; Muhammad et al., 2023; Ramli et al., 2023; Syaputra et al., 2023; Muhammad et al., 2023). Additionally, research indicates that being away from family, combined with high work pressure and fatigue, contributes to significant mental health issues among ship crew members, highlighting the need for targeted solutions in this sector (Harvey & Mallman, 2019; Hasan et al., 2021; Bova & Lusardi, 2022; Hasan et al., 2021). The majority

of Indonesian female migrant workers are employed as caretakers, particularly taking care of their parents in nursing facilities, in addition to their responsibilities as members of ship crew ships. Before leaving, they get supplies and language instruction, but it takes one to two years to adjust and minimize stress (Hasan et al., 2021).

Attainment of Educational Parity

Indonesian migrant workers have difficulties in achieving educational objectives, unlike school-age children. Many do not pass the Package A equivalency test, which is equivalent to elementary school. Children of the same age who are enrolled in the same educational level can graduate from high school. The complexity of the psychological issues faced by migrant workers contributes to these difficulties (Hasan et al., 2021). Table 4 outlines the factors that contribute to learning success. School-age students succeed in their education and pass elementary school effectively because they have no issues with managing their study time. Additionally, they experience minimal stress, with the primary stressor being culture shock in Taiwan. Moreover, students who have autism have the potential to be successful in their academic endeavors, despite their developmental disorders. For these two siblings with autism, the main challenge is maintaining focus during online learning, such as struggling to stay attentive during Zoom meetings (Halle et al., 2016). Additionally, their existing difficulties with social interaction contribute to the experience culture shock whenever they move to a new setting. However, these challenges were relatively minor because they had already received prior education in Indonesia, allowing them to simply continue their program once they arrived in Taiwan. In contrast, migrant workers face issues with learning outcomes from the outset. One primary factor is their frequent absence from class. Ship crew members are often away at sea, while caregivers frequently employees are not granted authorization by their organizations to use periods off for studies.

Table 4. Comparing Features Leads to Successful Learning

No.	Aspect	Description		
		Migrant Worker	Students	Students with Autism
1	Long of Stay	5 Years	1 Year	2 Years
2	Reasons for Stress	Communicative employer responsibilities of a ship crew when at sea Shocking Society	Shock Culture	Culture Shock Studying online requires a lot of concentration
3	Problems with Learning Time	Become used to the work and school schedule	No	No

The primary obstacle to learning outcomes for migrant workers is their low motivation. They often lack the drive to pursue educational equality and become complacent with their current situation, even though their qualifications are only equivalent to elementary school. Although future job markets will demand higher qualifications, even though many migrant workers are pleased with their existing income, they are unaware of this fact, at least up until the seventh grade. Taking into consideration the chance that their present position may become outdated or demand greater credentials is something that they must accomplish, which could jeopardize their employment. Ship crewmen have been able to get certificates that are equal to SD as stated in (Kejar Paket A, SMP in Kejar Paket B, and SMA in Kejar Paket C) due to the various initiatives to offer non-formal education services. However, the curriculum provided by these programs does not adequately address the difficulties in finding work or the particular requirements of ship personnel. Therefore, a comprehensive curriculum is necessary to equip ship crews with skills beyond basic education requirements. Additionally, there is a need for services aimed at improving their mental health

4. Conclusion and future scope

Generally speaking, the findings of the research indicate that kids of school age have positive mental health. In contrast, Indonesian migrant workers face numerous challenges in participating in non-formal education. They experience higher stress levels, struggle to adhere to the learning schedule, and frequently miss classes, leading to suboptimal learning outcomes. Additionally, the study found that some of the students are autistic. Autistic students receive a specialized curriculum to ensure they

receive equitable education. Although it may take them longer, these students tend to be more organized and successfully reach their learning objectives. According to the findings of this study, developing a counseling technique customized for Indonesian migrant workers would have advantageous outcomes, as it would serve to inspire and encourage them to pursue education and achieve equality. Additionally, there is a need to develop a tailored curriculum for students in Taiwan.

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Conflict of interest

The study's authors declare that they have no financial interests in the themes or materials discussed in this publication, including honoraria, educational funding, employment, consultancies, stock ownership, or other equity interests, speaking engagements, or patent-licensing agreements, as well as non-financial interests such as affiliations, knowledge, or beliefs.

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