

Empowerment Indonesian Migrants Workers through Continuing Education for Better Adaptation in Overseas

Vera Bararah Barid ^a, Rofi Wahanisa ^b ✉, Sri Wahyu Krida Sakti ^c,
Purwaningdyah Murti Wahyuni ^d

^a Researcher at Research Center fo Law, The National Research and
Innovation (BRIN), Indonesia

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5257-5426>

^b Faculty of Law, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8556-1805>

^c Faculty of Law, Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia

^d Faculty of Law, Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia

<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-0377-4903>

✉ Corresponding email: rofiwahanisa@mail.unnes.ac.id

Abstract

Indonesian migrant workers encounter significant challenges in adapting to the legal, social, and cultural environments of their destination countries. Limited knowledge of local legal systems and employment regulations often increases their vulnerability to labor exploitation and legal disputes. This study examines the challenges faced

by Indonesian migrant workers in the adaptation process and analyzes the role of legal education in strengthening their legal awareness and capacity for social integration. Employing a socio-legal approach, the research utilizes primary data obtained through interviews and institutional information, complemented by secondary data from legislation, academic literature, and relevant policy documents. The findings reveal three key issues. First, Indonesian migrant workers face legal, linguistic, cultural, and socio-economic barriers that hinder effective adaptation in host countries. Second, limited access to legal information and education reduces their ability to understand and exercise their rights and obligations under the legal framework of the destination country. Third, the Continuing Education (CE) Program developed by the Universitas Terbuka for Overseas Students provides an accessible legal education platform that enhances legal literacy, supports social adaptation, and promotes awareness of workers' rights and responsibilities. This study argues that legal education constitutes a preventive mechanism for migrant worker protection by empowering individuals to navigate foreign legal systems and reduce legal vulnerability. It further highlights the importance of state support through accessible and sustainable educational programs as an integral component of migrant worker protection and empowerment.

KEYWORDS

Continuing Education, Indonesian Migrant Workers, Empowerment.

Introduction

Employment opportunities abroad, or becoming Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI), continue to attract significant interest among the Indonesian population. This situation is understandable given that the availability of domestic employment remains relatively limited and has not yet been able to fully absorb the continuously growing labor force. According to data from Statistics Indonesia (*Badan Pusat Statistik*), the number of unemployed persons in Indonesia reached 7.28 million in February 2025, with an open unemployment rate of

approximately 4.76%.¹ This finding aligns with Adriyanto's (2020) study, which illustrates that the expansion of the labour force in Indonesia does not consistently lead to a proportional rise in employment opportunities, thereby creating structural limitations in the domestic labour market's ability to accommodate job seekers.²

Official records from the Indonesian Migrant Workers Protection Agency (BP2MI) indicate that in 2024, there were 297,434 placements of Indonesian migrant workers (PMI), however by mid-December 2025, this number decreased to 286,422.³ This figure indicates the number of PMI who exited through official channels and were documented administratively. In addition to these statistics, other studies suggest that non-procedural migrant workers continue to operate overseas without sufficient legal and administrative safeguards, rendering them significantly more susceptible to exploitation and violations of their rights. This condition verifies that both formally and informally moving workers encounter significant dangers and challenges within the realm of international labour migration.⁴

Despite the allure of employment as an Indonesian Migrant Worker, which offers the prospect of comparatively elevated income, certain qualifications and procedures must be addressed. Cross-border labour migration requires skills appropriate to the necessary field and proficiency in the official language of the host country. Indonesian

¹ Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS), *Tingkat Pengangguran Terbuka (TPT) Februari 2025*, Berita Resmi Statistik, <https://www.bps.go.id>

² Adriyanto, Didi Prasetyo, dan Rosmiyati Khodijah, "Angkatan Kerja dan Faktor yang Mempengaruhi Pengangguran," *Jurnal Ilmu Ekonomi & Sosial* 11, no. 2 (Oktober 2020): 66–82, <https://doi.org/10.35724/jies.v11i2.2965>

³ Badan Pelindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia (BP2MI), *Data Penempatan dan Pelindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia Tahun 2024 dan Data SISKOP2MI per 15 Desember 2025*, <https://bp2mi.go.id>.

⁴ Badan Pelindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia (BP2MI), *Kebijakan Pelindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia dan Tantangan PMI Non-Prosedural*, <https://bp2mi.go.id>; lihat juga International Labour Organization (ILO), *Triangle in ASEAN: Protecting Migrant Workers from Exploitation*, ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, <https://www.ilo.org>

Migrant Workers (PMI) encounter numerous social, cultural, and legal adaption obstacles throughout the migration cycle, encompassing pre-placement, employment in the host country, and post-repatriation to Indonesia. Numerous studies demonstrate that deficiencies in readiness, at both individual and systemic levels, frequently place migrant workers in a vulnerable negotiating position within transnational employment arrangements.⁵

Various empirical findings reported by Indonesian Migrant Workers in destination countries indicate that low legal awareness is one of the main factors contributing to their vulnerability. A significant number of Indonesian migrant workers lack a comprehensive awareness of their employment contracts, their rights and obligations as migrant workers, and the labour laws relevant to the host country. The insufficient understanding of legal avenues and protective measures impedes PMI's capacity to assert its rights in relation to labour concerns, including wage disputes, excessive working hours, and workplace violence, along with the potential for criminalisation.⁶

In addition to legal considerations, inadequate foreign language competency constricts the communication opportunities for Indonesian migrant workers in host countries with colleagues, employers, government officials, and protective agencies, hence heightening the risk of exploitation and unjust treatment.⁷ Numerous studies indicate

⁵ Silvey, R., "Unequal Borders: Indonesian Transnational Migrants at Immigration Control," *Geopolitics* 12, no. 2 (2007): 265–279, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650040601168917>; also see Bal, C. S., & Gerard, K., "ASEAN's Governance of Migrant Worker Rights," *Third World Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (2018): 799–819, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2017.1387478>; Barid, V. B., Kridasakti, S. W., & Wahyuni, P. M., "Legal Literacy Strengthening for Indonesian Migrant Workers," *Fiat Justisia: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 16, no. 3 (2022): 209–226, <https://doi.org/10.25041/fiatjustisia.v16no3.2673>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Fernández García, Marta, et al., "Migrant Workers' Perspectives on Labour Exploitation in Spain," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2023.2235896>

that the challenges encountered by migrating workers stem not just from human deficiencies but are also shaped by a comprehensive institutional framework, encompassing migration rules, labour protection systems, and imbalanced power dynamics in the host country.⁸

In this context, education becomes one of the strategic instruments to strengthen the capacity and bargaining power of Indonesian Migrant Workers in navigating the complexity of cross-border labour migration. Education for Indonesian Migrant Workers in addressing the intricacies of cross-border labour mobility. Education functions as a mechanism for enhancing knowledge and as a way of empowerment, allowing Indonesian Migrant Workers to comprehend their labour rights and enhance their adaptability in a transnational work context.⁹

A significant advancement is the establishment of a continuing education program launched by the Universitas Terbuka for Indonesian Migrant Workers employed overseas. This program aims to address the constraints of time, distance, and educational accessibility through a flexible and inclusive distance learning model, enabling Indonesian migrant workers to acquire fundamental legal knowledge and comprehension of labour rights without relinquishing their primary employment.¹⁰

The presence of Indonesian migrant worker groups in destination countries, alongside official educational institutions, considerably facilitates the sharing of adaption processes and the empowerment of

⁸ Bal, Charmaine S., dan Katherine Gerard, "ASEAN's Governance of Migrant Worker Rights," *Third World Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (2018): 799–819, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2017.1387478>; Silvey, Rachel, "Unequal Borders," *Geopolitics* 12, no. 2 (2007)

⁹ Ruhs, M. (2013). *The Price of Rights: Regulating International Labor Migration*. Princeton University Press; lihat juga ILO, *Fair Migration: Setting an ILO Agenda* (Geneva: ILO, 2017).

¹⁰ Barid et al., op. cit.,

Indonesian migrant workers. Community networks provide as platforms for information dissemination, social cohesion, and preliminary assistance when Indonesian migrant workers encounter legal or labour challenges.¹¹ Consequently, the collaboration between the nation-driven sustainable education and the backing of the Indonesian migrant workers community is a crucial element in enhancing Indonesian migrant workers' resilience and flexibility internationally¹²

This article proposes that sustainable education, particularly legal knowledge, becomes a strategic tool for improving the adaptive capacity of Indonesian Migrant Workers in cross-border labour migration. This research enhances prior studies on the safeguarding and susceptibility of Indonesian Migrant Workers by framing education and community support as enduring and contextually relevant empowerment techniques, while also augmenting the prevailing formal legal protections.

This study utilises a socio-legal framework and qualitative methodologies to examine the interplay between legal norms, policies, and social practices affecting the experiences of Indonesian Migrant Workers in cross-border labour migration. This perspective perceives law not solely as a normative document, but as a social practice functioning within particular social, economic, and institutional frameworks, so providing a more contextual examination of migrant worker protection.¹³

¹¹ Ryan, L. (2011). "Migrants' Social Networks and Weak Ties." *Sociology* 45(4): 707–724. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2011.02030.x>

¹² Badan Pelindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia (BP2MI). *Laporan Tahunan Penempatan dan Pelindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia Tahun 2024; Data SISKOP2MI Tahun 2025*. <https://bp2mi.go.id>

¹³ Banakar, R., *Normativity in Legal Sociology: Methodological Reflections on Law and Regulation in Late Modernity*, *Law & Society Review* 44, no. 3–4 (2010): 641–666; also see Banakar, R., *Law and Social Theory* (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2013).

The research data is derived from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was acquired through comprehensive interviews with key informants and focus group discussions performed from 2020 to 2022. Secondary data was obtained through an examination of laws and regulations, policy documents, reports from pertinent institutions, and scholarly literature related to this subject. A qualitative data analysis was performed employing a descriptive-analytical methodology to discern patterns, themes, and correlations among sustainable education, legal literacy, and the adaptive capacity of Indonesian Migrant Workers.

A. Indonesian Migrant Workers' Challenges Abroad

Prior to examining the issues encountered by Indonesian Migrant Workers overseas, it is essential to comprehend the circumstances in which they reside and labour in host nations. Indonesian migrant workers are engaged in several areas, including domestic work, manufacturing, construction, caregiving, fishing, and other service industries.¹⁴ Numerous vocations are defined by temporary employment contracts, rigorous work schedules, and different levels of reliance on employers and recruiting agencies.¹⁵ Furthermore, Indonesian migrant workers must contend with varying legal frameworks, workplace laws, cultural conventions, and social contexts that may significantly diverge from those in Indonesia.¹⁶ Although these situations may not inherently provide issues, they generate various

¹⁴ Hugo, G., *Migration and Development in Indonesia* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2014); also see at Paulus Rudolf Yuniarto, "Indonesian Return Migrants Entrepreneurship at Home Village: Knowledge Production and Living Strategy," *Jurnal Kependudukan Indonesia* 13, no. 2 (2018): 91.

¹⁵ Chok Huan Goh, Kian Wee, dan Brenda S. A. Yeoh, "Migration Governance and the Migration Industry in Asia: Moving Domestic Workers from Indonesia to Singapore," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 17, no. 3 (2017): 401–433, <https://doi.org/10.1093/irap/lcx010>

¹⁶ Silvey, op. cit.

practical and structural impediments that affect migrant workers' capacity to adapt, assert their rights, and utilise protective mechanisms in host countries.¹⁷

Indonesian Migrant Workers often encounter numerous problems when employed and residing overseas. These problems pertain not just to economic factors but also to social, cultural, and psychological characteristics that directly influence the adaptability of Indonesian Migrant Workers in their host nations.¹⁸ Cultural, linguistic, dietary, ethnic, and communal differences frequently serve as an initial source of strain for Indonesian Migrant Workers, especially those embarking on overseas employment for the first time.¹⁹ This significant alteration in the social milieu necessitates that Indonesian Migrant Workers adapt quickly, frequently lacking sufficient support.

The situation is heightened by a work environment that dramatically contrasts with the social and cultural background of Indonesia. Employment standards, the dynamics between employees and employers, and expectations for productivity and discipline frequently render Indonesian Migrant Workers vulnerable. Numerous studies reveal that prolonged working hours, stringent time discipline requirements, and varying work standards are the primary challenges faced by Indonesian Migrant Workers in their host nations.²⁰ This

¹⁷ Bal, C. S., & Gerard, K., op.cit

¹⁸ Rudiantoro, Y. de Britto & da Silva, A. M. (2025). *Navigating English in the Workplace: Challenges and Strategies of Indonesian Migrant Workers*. *Lingua Cultura* 19(1): 9–16. <https://doi.org/10.21512/lc.v19i1.12899>; lihat juga Liem, A. (2021). *Acculturative stress and coping among migrant workers: A systematic review*. *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*. DOI: 10.1111/aphw.12271; lihat juga Zaini, AZ et al. (2025). *Cross-cultural adaptation and psychometric properties of the Short Acculturation Scale among Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia*. *BMC Psychology* (Springer) DOI: 10.1007/s44202-025-00429-1; lihat juga atambihe, C., & Tungka, K. (2024). *Pengalaman adaptasi pekerja migran Indonesia terhadap culture shock di Okinawa, Jepang*. *Dharma Medika Journals*. <https://doi.org/10.70524/gcb8nm13>

¹⁹ Barid et al., op. cit.,

²⁰ Hugo, G., op. cit;

disparity frequently induces physical and psychological stress, particularly when Indonesian Migrant Workers lack sufficient negotiating power in their employment relationships, or when they possess it but are uncertain about how to advocate for their rights as workers.²¹

Moreover, inadequate foreign language proficiency exacerbates the employment circumstances for Indonesian migrant workers, particularly when the instructional language in the host country significantly diverges (this is less probable if the destination country employs Malay, such as Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam). Language problems impede daily interactions with employers and co-workers, restrict comprehension of work instructions, and complicate Indonesian Migrant Workers' understanding of workplace regulations and policies. In numerous instances, these language barriers result in misunderstandings, disagreements, and even inequitable treatment of Indonesian Migrant Workers, including disproportionate employment penalties. Communication limitations also restrict access to official support when encountering employment challenges.²²

The lack of knowledge among Indonesian migrant workers about the terms of their employment contracts and the labour rights to which they are entitled is another frequent issue.²³ Numerous Indonesian Migrant Workers executed job contracts without sufficient

²¹ Ruhs, M. (2013). The price of rights: Regulating international labor migration. *International Migration Review*, 47(1), 180–211. <https://doi.org/10.1111/imre.12005>; lihat juga Bal, C. S., & Gerard, K. (2018). ASEAN's governance of migrant worker rights. *Third World Quarterly*, 39(4), 799–819.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2017.1387478>

²² Presbitero, A. (2020). *Foreign language skill, anxiety, cultural intelligence and individual task performance in global work contexts: A cognitive perspective*. *Journal of International Management*, 26(2), 100729. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intman.2019.100729>

²³ Hasil wawancara dengan informan yang sedang bekerja di LN, wawancara dilakukan melalui zoom pada bulan Agustus 2020

comprehension of working conditions, remuneration frameworks, working hours, leave entitlements, or grievance procedures in instances of infractions.²⁴ The absence of understanding renders Indonesian Migrant Workers susceptible to challenges such as unpaid salaries, unilateral wage reductions, or alterations in working circumstances that deviate from the original agreement. In this setting, the employment contract, intended as a protective mechanism, has instead emerged as a source of vulnerability.

In addition to employment concerns, psychological and social elements significantly influence the experiences of Indonesian Migrant Workers overseas. The substantial physical distance from family, constrained interaction with others, and absence of emotional support in the host country can adversely impact the mental health of Indonesian migrant workers, heightening the risk of stress, anxiety, and feelings of isolation during their migration experience.²⁵ In certain instances, this psychological pressure exacerbates Indonesian Migrant Workers' capacity to cope, make sensible judgements, and seek assistance in hazardous situations. This situation indicates that the susceptibility of Indonesian Migrant Workers encompasses not only financial factors but also emotional and social dimensions.²⁶

These findings correlate with research demonstrating that the susceptibility of Indonesian migrant workers abroad cannot be

²⁴ Barid et al., op. cit.,

²⁵ Bhugra, D. (2004). *Migration and mental health*. Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica, 109(4), 243–258. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.0001-690X.2003.00246.x>; lihat juga Liem, A. (2021). *Acculturative stress and coping among migrant workers: A systematic review*. Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being, 13(2), 309–336. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/aphw.12271>; lihat juga Chen, W., Ling, L., Renzaho, A. M. N. (2017). *Impacts of social support on the mental health of migrant workers*. BMC Public Health, 17, 431. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-017-4411-1>

²⁶ Barid, Vera Bararah & Nawawi, *Merajut Asa, Menggapai Mimpi, dan Meraih Sukses: Pembelajaran Kisah Sukses Mantan Pekerja Migran Indonesia dari Korea Selatan* (Jakarta: BRIN, 2023).

exclusively attributed to individual failure to adapt. This vulnerability arises from the interplay between individual variables and the labour migration framework, which has not yet offered sufficient protection.²⁷ The migration structure, labour regulation, and the power relations between employees and employers in the host nation also influence working conditions that are frequently inequitable. The challenges of life and labour faced by Indonesian Migrant Workers highlight the necessity of preventive and empowerment strategies, such as education, enhancement of legal literacy, and the fortification of social networks and communities of Indonesian Migrant Workers in host nations.²⁸

This perception is distinctly evidenced in numerous case studies of Indonesian migrant workers overseas. Numerous instances demonstrate how inadequate legal knowledge and foreign language proficiency expose Indonesian Migrant Workers to precarious circumstances. Certain Indonesian Migrant Workers have been reported to encounter legal challenges, including labour disputes, traffic infractions, and other concerns leading to criminal prosecutions. This occurs owing to multiple circumstances, one of which is the lack of comprehension of local legal protocols, the stipulations of employment contracts, or the fundamental rights afforded to them as migrant workers. Indonesian Migrant Workers may become entangled in legal proceedings not due to deliberate infractions, but rather as a result of administrative misinterpretations, lack of awareness regarding local

²⁷ Silvey, R., "Unequal Borders: Indonesian Transnational Migrants at Immigration Control," *Geopolitics* 12, no. 2 (2007): 265–279, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650040601168917>; lihat juga Bal, C. S., & Gerard, K., "ASEAN's Governance of Migrant Worker Rights," *Third World Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (2018): 799–819, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2017.1387478>.

²⁸ Ruhs, M. (2013). *The Price of Rights: Regulating International Labor Migration*. Princeton University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.23943/princeton/9780691152278.001.0001> lihat juga Bal, C. S., & Gerard, K. (2018). ASEAN's governance of migrant worker rights. *Third World Quarterly*, 39(4), 799–819. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2017.1387478>

laws, or ineffective communication with law enforcement in the host nation.²⁹

Another case demonstrates that inadequate foreign language skills directly affects the susceptibility of Indonesian Migrant Workers in the workplace. Indonesian migrant workers without proficiency in the official language of their host country frequently have challenges in comprehending work directives, employer warnings, and critical paperwork. This situation may result in workplace disputes, unilateral dismissal, or even allegations of legal infractions.³⁰ The findings affirm that the inability to adapt to language and legal frameworks affects employment opportunities and poses significant risks to the legal status and safety of Indonesian Migrant Workers overseas.³¹

B. The Important Skills for Indonesian Migrant Workers

According to the previous sub-chapter's description, Indonesian Migrant Workers should possess some essential abilities, representing a sort of workplace adaptability. This adaptation is a multifaceted social process intrinsically linked to the myriad challenges encountered by Indonesian Migrant Workers. The diverse problems encountered typically arise from labour, social, cultural, and psychological factors, suggesting that the risk of vulnerability in cross-border labour migration is a systemic issue rather than a mere coincidence.³² Consequently,

²⁹ Barid, Vera Bararah, Satrio W. Kridasakti, & Putri M. Wahyuni (2022); prosiding KIAS-BUFS tentang pengalaman PMI Indonesia di Korea Selatan.

³⁰ Barid, Vera Bararah & Nawawi (2023).

³¹ International Labour Organization (ILO), *Fair Migration: Setting an ILO Agenda* (Geneva: ILO, 2017); Fernández García, M., et al., "Migrant Workers' Perspectives on Labour Exploitation in Spain," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2023.2235896>

³² Ruhs, M. (2013). *The Price of Rights: Regulating International Labor Migration*. Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.23943/princeton/9780691152278.001.0001>; lihat juga Silvey, R. (2007). Unequal borders: Indonesian transnational migrants at immigration

strategic mitigation measures are essential to ensure that Indonesian migrant workers had sufficient competence to confront challenges that may emerge in the host country.³³

In migration literature, the adaptation of migrant workers is seen as the outcome of the combination between individual strategies and the prevailing structural framework. Personal methods comprise physical and mental preparedness, communication proficiency, and problem-solving capabilities, whereas the structural context involves labour systems, migration regulations, power dynamics within the workplace, and availability of legal protection resources in the host nation.³⁴ The acculturation framework indicates that cultural shortcutting can lead to acculturative stress, particularly when migrant workers encounter language hurdles, social isolation, and ambiguity regarding work norms and regulations.³⁵

This framework outlines numerous critical areas that Indonesian Migrant Workers must plan to mitigate risks from the beginning. *Primarily*, physical and mental preparedness constitutes the fundamental basis for Indonesian migrant workers to effectively manage work-related stress, familial separation, and social dynamics in an unfamiliar setting. Research on migration indicates that migrant workers possessing strong psychological readiness are more adept at handling stress and making sensible judgements in challenging

control. *Geopolitics*, 12(2), 265–279.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14650040601168917>

³³ Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology*, 46(1), 5–34. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.1997.tb01087.x>; lihat juga Barid, V. B., Kridasakti, S. W., & Wahyuni, P. M. (2022). Legal literacy strengthening for Indonesian migrant workers: Self-help ability to survive the life. *Fiat Justisia: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum*, 16(3), 209–226. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25041/fiatjustisia.v16no3.2673>

³⁴ Ruhs, M. (2013). *The Price of Rights: Regulating International Labor Migration*. Princeton University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.23943/princeton/9780691152278.001.0001>

³⁵ Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology*, 46(1), 5–34. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.1997.tb01087.x>

circumstances.³⁶ *Secondly*, possessing legal knowledge and comprehension of labour legislation in the host country is crucial for safeguarding against exploitative labour practices and enhancing the negotiating power of Indonesian migrant workers in transnational employment contexts. Inadequate legal literacy frequently places migrants in a precarious situation on work-related matters pertaining to their rights.³⁷ *Third*, proficiency in a foreign language is essential for facilitating workplace communication and social interactions with local inhabitants, comprehending employment contracts and directives, and using accessible support and protection systems in the host country. Language competence allows workers to better understand employment contracts, workplace regulations, and daily work instructions, while also improving their ability to seek assistance and access available protection mechanisms in the host country. Empirical studies have shown that limited language skills often exacerbate workers' vulnerability, as they hinder their capacity to negotiate working conditions, report abuses, and navigate institutional support systems. Conversely, adequate language proficiency enhances migrants' confidence, autonomy, and bargaining power, thereby contributing to safer and more sustainable integration into the labor market and the broader social environment³⁸

Initiatives to empower Indonesian migrant workers through physical and mental preparedness, legal and employment knowledge, and foreign language ability should be systematically developed and implemented from the pre-departure phase, rather than solely during

³⁶ Bhugra, D. (2004). Migration and mental health. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*, 109(4), 243–258. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.0001-690X.2003.00246.x>

³⁷ Barid et al., op. cit.,

³⁸ Presbitero, A. (2020). *Foreign language skill, anxiety, cultural intelligence and individual task performance in global virtual teams: A cognitive perspective*. *Journal of International Management*, 26(2), 100729. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intman.2019.100729> also see at Spörlein, C., & Kristen, C. (2020). *Migrants' legal consciousness: Legal knowledge, information exposure and perceived legal vulnerability*. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 46(18), 3596–3615. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2019.1687649>

their time abroad. This preventative strategy (education, training, and enhancing legal and linguistic literacy) can bolster the adaptive capability of Indonesian migrant workers and mitigate the risk of vulnerability throughout the migration process.³⁹ The Agency for the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers (BP2MI)/BP3MI acknowledges the Final Departure Briefing (PAP) as a pre-departure tool designed to prepare prospective Indonesian migrant workers with information on arrival, employment, residence in the host country, and repatriation to Indonesia.⁴⁰

In various placement pathways, pre-departure necessitates tailored preparation based on the destination country. For instance, South Korea, employing a Government-to-Government (G-to-G) framework, mandates the successful completion of the EPS-TOPIK as a crucial prerequisite for employment applications inside the Employment Permit System.⁴¹ In Japan, some placement options, such as the Specified Skilled Worker (*Tokutei Ginou*), necessitate the successful completion of a Japanese language examination and a sector-specific skills assessment. The requirements are highlighted in the information for foreign workers inside the SSW plan.⁴²

Moreover, numerous placement notifications disseminated by the Agency for the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers (BP2MI)

³⁹ Sumasa, S. (2020). Evaluasi pembekalan akhir pemberangkatan bagi pekerja migran Indonesia di luar negeri. *Jurnal Widyaiswara Indonesia*, 1(3), 130–139. Lihat juga BP3MI Sulawesi Tenggara & P3MI, berita pelaksanaan PAP bagi CPMI (portal KP2MI/BP2MI).

⁴⁰ Sumasa, S. (2020). Evaluasi pembekalan akhir pemberangkatan bagi pekerja migran Indonesia di luar negeri. *Jurnal Widyaiswara Indonesia*, 1(3), 130–139. Lihat juga Contoh klausul PAP dalam dokumen penempatan pada sistem resmi BP2MI (SISKOP2MI).

⁴¹ BP2MI, “JUKNIS Pencarian Sertifikat EPS-TOPIK” (dokumen resmi BP2MI). lihat juga Pengumuman program G to G Korea Selatan (KP2MI/BP2MI) yang menegaskan kelulusan EPS-TOPIK sebagai kualifikasi/syarat untuk melamar.

⁴² Embassy of Japan in Indonesia. *Tokutei Ginou (Specified Skilled Worker/SSW): Examination Information*.
<https://www.id.emb-japan.go.jp>

stipulate Japanese language proficiency prerequisites, either by achieving a passing score on the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT)—equivalent to N5, for instance—or the Japan Foundation Test for Basic Japanese (JFT-Basic), typically acquired through a Vocational Training Institution (LPK) or an accredited Job Training Centre as a component of the pre-departure preparation.⁴³ Similarly, Hong Kong, China, and Taiwan utilise Mandarin or Cantonese; so, migrant workers are encouraged to possess proficiency in Mandarin, particularly for the domestic and caregiving sectors. The pre-departure preparation often encompasses fundamental language resources, workplace culture, and local employment legislation.⁴⁴

Besides language requirements, specific courses and occupational training programs prioritise the cultivation of discipline and physical endurance prior to departure. This initiative aims to cultivate work ethic and preparedness among participants, highlighting discipline, resilience, and acclimatisation to work culture.⁴⁵ Therefore, pre-departure preparation, encompassing job-specific technical training, legal/employment education, and language proficiency (including certification if required), functions as a protective asset that aids Indonesian migrant workers in adapting and working more safely in their destination countries.⁴⁶

The pre-placement process in Indonesia is structured as a competency preparation stage for potential Indonesian migrant

⁴³ BP2MI. *Pengumuman Penempatan Pekerja Migran Indonesia ke Jepang melalui Skema G to G/Tokutei Ginou*. Portal resmi BP2MI/SISKOP2MI.

⁴⁴ Contoh *adjustment training* bahasa Korea untuk CPMI melalui balai pelatihan vokasi (BPVP). Balai Pelatihan Vokasi dan Produktivitas

⁴⁵ Pont-Grau, A., Lei, Y.-H., Lim, J. Z. E., & Xia, X. (2023). "The effect of language training on immigrants' integration: Does the duration of training matter?" *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 212: 160–198, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jebo.2023.05.027>

⁴⁶ Rudiantoro, Y. deBritto & da Silva, A. M. (2025). "Navigating English in the Workplace: Challenges and Strategies of Indonesian Migrant Workers," *Lingua Cultura* 19(1): 9–16, <https://doi.org/10.21512/lc.v19i1.12899>

workers. The Agency for the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers (BP2MI) Regulation No. 2 of 2023 underscores the significance of a "pre-work phase" and pre-placement training/briefing.⁴⁷ The Agency for the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers (BP2MI) acknowledges the Final Departure Briefing (PAP) as a pre-departure briefing designed to assist prospective Indonesian migrant workers in comprehending the facets of arrival, employment, and living conditions in the destination country, as well as their return.⁴⁸

Empowerment persists for Indonesian migrant workers while they are employed overseas. Integration policies across different nations indicate that sophisticated language acquisition programs in the host country are essential for enhancing workplace communication, comprehending local customs, and obtaining protective services. Recent research affirm that language obstacles continue to pose a substantial issue in the workplace, and that persistent language learning strategies—whether via formal training or informal workplace learning—are essential adaptive mechanisms.⁴⁹ Language acquisition functions not merely as a communication instrument but also as a method to enhance self-assurance, augment negotiating leverage, and mitigate the likelihood of misinterpretations that may incite conflict or workplace repercussions.⁵⁰ International empirical evidence indicates that the

⁴⁷ Peraturan BP2MI No. 2 Tahun 2023 tentang pedoman tahapan sebelum bekerja bagi Calon Pekerja Migran Indonesia.

⁴⁸ Definisi dan fungsi Pembekalan Akhir Pemberangkatan (PAP) pada portal KP2MI/BP2MI; serta studi evaluasi PAP. KP2MI+1

⁴⁹ Rudiantoro, Y. de Britto, & da Silva, A. M. (2025). Navigating English in the workplace: Challenges and strategies of Indonesian migrant workers. *Lingua Cultura*, 19(1), 9–16. <https://doi.org/10.21512/lc.v19i1.12899> lihat juga Dustmann, C., & Fabbri, F. (2003). Language proficiency and labour market performance of immigrants in the UK. *Economic Journal*, 113(489), 695–717. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0297.t01-1-00151>

⁵⁰ Holzmann, R., & Jørgensen, S. (2000). Social risk management: A new conceptual framework for social protection. *World Bank Social Protection Discussion Paper*.

intensity of language training is associated with improved integration and employment outcomes.⁵¹

This multi-layered approach highlights that Indonesian migrant workers' adaptation to transnational employment relationships is not a one-time event but rather the outcome of the accumulation of individual capacities backed by structural support in the form of social and community networks, educational and training institutions, and policies.⁵² The empowerment of Indonesian migrant workers should not be viewed solely as a matter of individual capabilities, but rather as a collective obligation involving individuals, the state, and institutions engaged in labour migration administration.

Consequently, pertinent technical abilities, linguistic proficiency, and legal and labour literacy must be regarded as a cohesive kind of protective capital for Indonesian migrant workers. This capital assists Indonesian migrant workers in completing professional work expectations while also allowing them to manage unequal employment relationships and utilise available protective measures.⁵³ Enhancing this capacity should be regarded as a multi-faceted and continuous process,

⁵¹ Pont-Grau, A., Lei, Y.-H., Lim, J. Z. E., & Xia, X. (2023). "The effect of language training on immigrants' integration: Does the duration of training matter?" *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 212: 160–198, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jebo.2023.05.027>. baca juga Rudiantoro, Y. deBritto & da Silva, A. M. (2025). "Navigating English in the Workplace: Challenges and Strategies of Indonesian Migrant Workers," *Lingua Cultura* 19(1): 9–16, <https://doi.org/10.21512/lc.v19i1.12899>.

⁵² Barid et al., op. cit., also see at ILO. (2017). *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*. Geneva: International Labour Organization.

⁵³ Holzmann, R., & Jørgensen, S. (2000). *Social risk management: A new conceptual framework for social protection*. World Bank Social Protection Discussion Paper. Lihat juga Ruhs, M. (2013). *The price of rights: Regulating international labor migration*. Princeton University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.23943/princeton/9780691152278.001.0001>
Barid, V. B., Kridasakti, S. W., & Wahyuni, P. M. (2022). Legal literacy strengthening for Indonesian migrant workers: Self-help ability to survive the life. *Fiat Justisia: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum*, 16(3), 209–226. <https://doi.org/10.25041/fiatjustisia.v16no3.2673>

commencing in the pre-departure phase and persisting throughout the Indonesian migrant worker's tenure in the host nation.⁵⁴

C. Continuing Education as A Strategy for Empowering Indonesian Migrant Workers

Legal education serves as a pivotal tool in enhancing the protection and empowerment of Indonesian Migrant Workers amid the intricacies of cross-border labour movement. In the realm of international migration, marked by power disparities, restricted access to information, and systemic vulnerabilities, legal education is crucial in enhancing the ability of Indonesian Migrant Workers to comprehend, negotiate, and assert their rights as migrants. Numerous international studies affirm that enhancing legal and labour literacy is a crucial component of non-formal protection tactics for migrant workers, particularly when official protection procedures are insufficiently effective.⁵⁵

I. Continuing Education as A Strategy for Indonesian Migrant Workers

A tangible manifestation of legal education for Indonesian migrant workers is the establishment of continuing education programs. Continuing education aims to mitigate the constraints of time, distance, and educational access encountered by migrant workers, acknowledging that the majority lack the opportunity to

⁵⁴ ILO. (2017). *Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda*. Geneva: International Labour Organization. Lihat juga: Pont-Grau, A., Lei, Y.-H., Lim, J. Z. E., & Xia, X. (2023). The effect of language training on immigrants' integration: Does the duration of training matter? *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 212, 160–198.

⁵⁵ Ruhs, M. (2013). *The Price of Rights: Regulating International Labor Migration*. Princeton University Press.

engage in traditional formal education when employed overseas. The continuous education program enables Indonesian Migrant Workers to engage in learning flexibly while maintaining their core employment.

Indonesia's experience demonstrates that the ongoing education program established by the Universitas Terbuka significantly enhances Indonesian migrants workers' adaptive capacity and legal literacy. A study published in *Fiat Justitia: Journal of Law* demonstrates that continuing education-based legal instruction enhances Indonesian migrants workers' awareness of labour rights and obligations, comprehension of employment contracts, and capacity to identify and address potential legal infractions in their host countries.⁵⁶ The distant learning strategy employed by Universitas Terbuka facilitates more inclusivity for both Indonesian migrants workers' students and non-students, with comparatively low minimum educational prerequisites.

The continuing education method conceptually coincides with the lifelong learning paradigm advocated by international organisations as a strategic adaptation to global labour market fluctuations and cross-border labour mobility.⁵⁷ Education is now recognised as an ongoing process that supports workers throughout their migratory cycle, rather than being confined to the pre-employment period.

II. The Urgency of Education for Indonesian Migrant Workers

The Imperative of Education for Indonesian Migrant Workers
Education is increasingly vital for Indonesian migrant workers, as inadequate legal literacy and restricted knowledge frequently exacerbate their vulnerability overseas. Migrant workers often find themselves in a precarious bargaining position in transnational

⁵⁶ Barid et al., op. cit.,

⁵⁷ OECD. (2019). *International Migration Outlook 2019*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
<https://doi.org/10.1787/c3e35eec-en>

employment partnerships due to insufficient understanding of labour law, employment contracts, and protective measures. Numerous worldwide studies indicate that migrant workers with superior education and legal literacy have an enhanced capacity to evade exploitation, obtain aid, and negotiate more equitable working circumstances.⁵⁸

In Indonesia, legal education functions as a preventive strategy against the myriad labour and legal challenges frequently encountered by Indonesian migrant workers. By comprehending their rights and responsibilities from the beginning, Indonesian migrant workers are anticipated to identify risks, evaluate work situations objectively, and implement suitable measures when encountering challenges in their host nations. Consequently, legal education is aimed not just at dispute resolution but also at enhancing Indonesian Migrant Workers' ability to endure and adapt autonomously.

III. Training Education as An Alternative Empowerment Pathway

In addition to academic-based continuing education, vocational training or practical training serves as a significant alternative for enhancing Indonesian Migrant Workers' capacity. This training may encompass fundamental legal principles, communication competencies, and sector-specific knowledge pertinent to Indonesian Migrant Workers' field of operation. Applied training enables Indonesian Migrant Workers to acquire knowledge applicable directly to their daily work environment.

Global literature suggests that competency-based training enhances migrant workers' confidence, procedural comprehension, and capacity to address intricate job scenarios.⁵⁹ In this setting,

⁵⁸ Barid et al., op. cit.,

⁵⁹ Ocampo, A. C. G., et al. (2022). "Career adaptability and migrant workers' adjustment." *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 138: 103759. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2022.103759>

vocational training is designed to enhance and reinforce the whole educational experience rather than supplant formal schooling.

IV. Language Education in Host Countries as A Crucial Adaptation Strategy

In addition to programs established in countries of origin, educational options available in destination countries—especially language instruction—are essential for migrant adaptation. In numerous prominent destination nations for international migrant workers, including South Korea, local authorities provide language and cultural orientation programs for these workers. These programs enhance workplace communication, comprehension of local customs, and access to public services, thereby mitigating the likelihood of misunderstandings that could grow into conflicts or legal issues.

Global studies repeatedly demonstrate that mastery of the host nation's language markedly improves migrants' social integration, occupational safety, and access to legal safeguards.⁶⁰ In the Korean setting, language training enhances job performance and facilitates access to legal information and public services that would otherwise be unattainable.

V. Migrant Communities as Informal Legal Knowledge Intermediaries

Migrant communities in destination nations serve as crucial informal information brokers alongside formal education and training organisations. Migrant networks frequently function as the primary source of information concerning labour regulations, administrative processes, and grievance procedures. Indonesian Migrant Workers share experiences, coping tactics, and survival information through social connections and collective solidarity.

⁶⁰ Ali, H. V. (2025). "Navigating identity and agency through English education." *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 12: 101816. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101816>

Recent studies indicate that migrant community networks often fill deficiencies in formal protection systems, particularly in destination countries with restricted access to legal services.⁶¹ Migrant communities provide as both social environments and informal frameworks for legal literacy and worker protection. The synergy between continuing education, practical training, language education in the destination country, and community support provides a comprehensive approach that can strengthen the resilience and adaptability of migrant workers abroad.

Collectively, ongoing education, practical training, language acquisition in host countries, and community-oriented knowledge exchange constitute a holistic empowerment framework for Indonesian Migrant Workers. These layered interventions emphasize that migrant adaptation is not an instantaneous process but rather an accumulation of capacities developed over time.

Accordingly, the empowerment of Indonesian Migrant Workers should not be reduced to individual responsibility alone. It should be perceived as a collective responsibility involving workers, governments, educational entities, and civil society participants in migration governance. By implementing sustained, inclusive, and accessible educational initiatives, IMWs can be better prepared to confront structural injustices, assert their rights, and cultivate safer and more dignified working conditions overseas.

⁶¹ Ryan, L. (2011). "Migrants' Social Networks and Weak Ties." *Sociology* 45(4): 707–724. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2011.02030.x>

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the challenges faced by Indonesian Migrant Workers in host countries are multidimensional, encompassing legal, social, cultural, linguistic, and psychological dimensions. These findings indicate that migrant workers' vulnerability cannot be explained solely by individual limitations but rather results from the interaction between personal preparedness and the structural conditions of transnational labour migration. Limited legal literacy, inadequate language proficiency, unequal employment relationships, and restricted access to institutional protection collectively increase the risk of legal and social vulnerability throughout the migration process.

From a socio-legal perspective, the study highlights legal education as a strategic instrument of empowerment rather than merely a means of transferring legal knowledge. Legal education equips migrant workers with the capacity to understand their rights and obligations, interpret employment contracts, navigate legal and administrative systems in host countries, and make informed decisions in complex employment settings. Accordingly, legal education should be viewed as a preventive mechanism that strengthens legal awareness and reduces the likelihood of labour exploitation and legal disputes.

The findings further demonstrate that continuing education provides a flexible and inclusive framework for supporting migrant workers throughout the migration cycle. The Continuing Education Program offered by Universitas Terbuka through its overseas learning centres illustrates how distance learning can improve legal literacy and adaptive capacity without disrupting employment. When integrated with vocational training, host-country language instruction, and community-based learning initiatives, continuing education forms a comprehensive empowerment model that supports Indonesian Migrant Workers before departure, during overseas employment, and upon reintegration.

This study contributes to the socio-legal literature on migrant worker protection by positioning legal education as a sustainable and rights-based component of labour migration governance. Unlike previous studies that primarily emphasise formal legal protection or institutional enforcement, this research demonstrates that

empowerment is a continuous process shaped by the interaction of education, community support, and institutional engagement across all stages of migration. Empirically, the study provides evidence that the distance learning model implemented by Universitas Terbuka represents an effective strategy for strengthening the legal awareness, adaptive capacity, and resilience of Indonesian Migrant Workers, thereby complementing formal legal protection mechanisms and promoting more sustainable migrant worker governance.

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