

The Job Resilience of Indonesian Migrant Workers in Taiwan in Terms of Motivation and Social Support

Sri Astuti Nasir^{1*}, Indri Iswardhani², Nulthazam Sarah³, Nur Fadilah Ayu Sandira⁴, Rostina⁵

Program Studi Manajemen, Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis, Universitas Negeri Makassar

E-mail: sri.astuti.nasir@unm.ac.id

Abstract. (Work Resilience of Indonesian Migrant Workers in Taiwan Based on Motivation and Social Support). Work resilience of Indonesian domestic migrant workers has become a significant issue in the dynamics of cross-border employment, particularly in Taiwan. This study aims to explore the interrelation between work motivation, social support, and work resilience in the lived experiences of Indonesian domestic migrant workers. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed through a single case study using in-depth online interviews with one informant who has worked in Taiwan for nearly six years. The primary data were supported by secondary sources, including scholarly journals and official reports. The findings reveal that work motivation—both intrinsic and developed through work experiences such as improved soft skills—serves as a key driver in building individual resilience. Social support from family, migrant communities, and employers provides emotional strength and practical resources that enhance the workers' ability to cope with physical and psychological pressures. Moreover, positive relationships with employers and trust in carrying out responsibilities contribute to a sense of competence and self-confidence. Institutional support from the government through agencies such as BP2MI also underpins worker protection and resilience. This study concludes that the work resilience of migrant workers is shaped by the synergy between strong internal motivation and the presence of social support in various forms.

Keywords: *Work Resilience, Work Motivation, Social Support, Migrant Workers, Taiwan.*

INTRODUCTION

The migration of Indonesian female workers abroad, particularly to Taiwan, has become a significant part of the global labor market in recent years. The majority of them work as domestic workers, caring for the elderly or performing other household tasks. The decision to migrate is driven not only by economic constraints but also by the aspiration to.

To improve their families' standard of living, enhance their self-esteem, and pursue financial independence. However, despite these goals, migrant workers often face high work pressure, cultural alienation, communication difficulties, and a deep longing for their families back home.

In the context of human resource management (HRM), it is important to understand how migrant workers are able to maintain motivation and job resilience amidst these challenges. Job resilience (*work resilience*) is an individual's ability to survive, recover, and adapt positively in the face of continuous work pressure.

This research is based on Positive Organizational Behavior (POB) developed by (Luthans, 2002), which emphasizes positive psychological strengths in the workplace, including self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience. The concept of resilience in this theory refers to an individual's capacity to recover from stress and continue to thrive. On the other hand, the social support theory of (Morelli et al., 2015) highlights that social support encompasses emotional, practical, and cognitive support that can significantly improve an individual's well-being and psychological resilience, especially in stressful situations.

Previous research has shown that the job resilience of Indonesian domestic workers in Taiwan is influenced by their work motivation and the quality of social support they receive. Intrinsic motivation, such as the desire to improve their family's standard of living and achieve financial independence, and motivation fueled by improving soft skills, including language skills, emotional intelligence, and self-

reliance, are key drivers for resilience amidst work pressures and cultural adaptation (Anwar & Mustika, 2024). In a social context, Guritno & Aryo, 2024, showed that *bonding social capital* (support from fellow workers) and *linking social capital* Positive relationships with employers provide emotional support, access to information, and practical resources that strengthen their resilience in stressful work situations. Meanwhile, Pham et al. (2024), through a study of 420 migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, showed that perceived organizational support from employers and employment agencies increased resilience and psychological well-being through tangible support and ethical leadership. Therefore, this study seeks to explore in depth the relationship between work motivation and social support on job resilience among Indonesian domestic migrant workers in Taiwan.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach with a single case study method. The goal was to understand in-depth the relationship between work motivation and social support on job retention among Indonesian domestic migrant workers in Taiwan. The informant in this study was a female Indonesian migrant worker who had worked as a domestic worker in Taiwan for almost six years. The informant was selected purposively based on the considerations of her extensive work experience, ability to reflect on her experiences, and willingness to be interviewed online.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth online interviews, recorded with permission, and transcribed for analysis. In addition to primary data from the interviews, this study also utilized secondary data from scientific journals, international organization reports, and official government documents.

Data analysis was conducted thematically, identifying patterns and

themes emerging from the interviews and then connecting them to theory and previous research findings. Data validity was strengthened through source triangulation and active researcher involvement in the interpretation process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An in-depth interview with an Indonesian domestic migrant worker in Taiwan reveals the complex psychosocial dynamics of nearly six years of overseas work. From the personal narrative, two dominant, interrelated themes emerge: work motivation and social support. These two aspects not only illustrate the background to the decision to migrate but also demonstrate how individuals build resilience in the face of emotional stress, physical burdens, and cultural challenges in the work environment. Motivation is a key driver of resilience, while social support strengthens the ability to survive and adapt positively to stressful work conditions.

1. Motivation as the Foundation of Work Resilience

Motivation is the initial driving force behind migrant workers' decisions to migrate and remains the primary force supporting them amidst complex work pressures. In the case of the informant, her initial motivation was fueled by her experience working at home, particularly in a factory where pressure, low wages, and minimal recognition were common. When a friend invited her to work in Taiwan, she immediately accepted the offer without much consideration.

"I saw that my friends were able to elevate their parents' status. So when I was invited here (to Taiwan), I immediately agreed without a second thought."

The informant's motivation appears to be a combination of external pressures and internal aspirations. He was driven by difficult economic conditions, while simultaneously possessing a strong

desire to make his parents happy, gain self-recognition, and prove his financial independence. After several years of work, this motivation evolved from simply fulfilling his daily needs to a passion for professional development, including mastering skills in caring for the elderly, despite his lack of medical background. This motivational transformation demonstrates a progressive dynamic, moving from a reactive motivation (avoiding domestic pressure) to a proactive and reflective motivation (building for the future). The informant stated that his work has had a tangible impact; he is no longer a burden on his family but is able to contribute financially, making him feel more confident in facing challenges.

This finding is supported by (Anwar & Mustika, 2024) who stated that female migrant workers with good levels of emotional intelligence and self-control tend to have more stable work motivation and higher productivity. Emotional intelligence acts as a mediator between personal experiences and long-term work goals. On the other hand, (Ismanto et al., 2023) revealed that many Indonesian migrant workers in Taiwan have entrepreneurial motivation, they work hard, save, and start businesses back home as a socio-economic transition strategy. Within the framework of *Positive Organizational Behavior*. According to Luthans (2002), this type of work motivation (POB) demonstrates aspects of hope, self-efficacy, and optimism, which are key components in shaping work resilience. When motivation stems from strong meaning and clear goals, individuals tend to be more resilient in the face of work pressure and more adaptive to change.

Thus, it can be concluded that work motivation is not just an initial reason for migration, but rather becomes the foundation of work resilience that enables workers to survive, grow, and

transform personally and professionally in a challenging work environment.

2. The Role of Social Support in Supporting Work Resilience

Social support emerged as the second most powerful factor influencing the job resilience of domestic migrant workers. Informants in this study emphasized that healthy and supportive relationships with immediate family members, such as parents, siblings, and partners, significantly influenced their emotional stability while working in Taiwan. They acknowledged that not all migrant workers share similar experiences; many of their colleagues experience severe stress and even depression due to a lack of moral and emotional support from their families back home.

"If your family isn't supportive, it can become toxic. There are many people here who are stressed out because their work is so demanding, but their families are constantly causing trouble."

The informant's social support came not only from family but also from fellow migrant workers and even employers. He established open and positive relationships with his coworkers, creating a psychologically safe work environment. The community of fellow migrants provided a place to share experiences, technical information, and a space for mutual support amidst the intense work pressures and longing for home.

"Our friends here are like family. When we're tired or sad, we talk and help each other."

This finding is in line with the study (Guritno & Aryo, 2024) which identified two important forms of social capital in the context of migrant workers, namely bonding *social capital*, namely the emotional relationship between fellow migrant workers and linking *social capital* namely, harmonious vertical

relationships with employers or authorities. Both forms of social capital have been proven effective in strengthening psychological resilience and facilitating the process of work adaptation in cross-cultural environments.

In some cases, the relationship between worker and employer can develop into a familial bond that provides a sense of security and emotional value. As stated by (Liao, 2022), the relationship that develops between domestic workers and employers often resembles a family relationship, fostering emotional closeness, such as trust and a sense of belonging. Informants in this study also felt the same way when their employers provided them with hands-on training and full trust to care for elderly patients independently.

From an organizational perspective, (Pham et al., 2024) shows that *perceived organizational support* Perceptions of institutional support have a positive impact on migrant workers' resilience and well-being. In this regard, informal training, recognition of competence, and open communication are significant sources of psychological support. Informants acknowledged that direct training from employers and opportunities to learn through practical experience provided a strong boost to self-confidence and job retention.

This finding is also supported by institutional data and reports. According to the ILO report (*Migrant Workers in the Care Economy Note 2024 Final.pdf*, n.d.), migrant workers in the care sector face significant challenges such as long working hours, emotional distress, and limited access to basic rights. The report recommends pre-placement training, fair grievance mechanisms, and clear and equitable employment contracts as much-needed structural support for migrant workers.

Structural support is also evident in Indonesian government data. BP2MI (*LAPTAH 2024 PMI Data Publication Report*, t.t.) The Indonesian Migrant Workers Association (IDX: TSSA) reported that migrant worker placement services reached 297,434 cases that year, the majority of which worked in the domestic sector. Although complaints decreased by 24.8% compared to the previous year, challenges remain in terms of access to training, legal assistance, and clear channels for complaints. This means that the formal government protection system needs to be continuously strengthened to align with the real needs of migrant workers on the ground.

Thus, it can be concluded that social support is present not only in the form of emotional relationships but also encompasses practical, structural, and institutional support. When all these forms of support work synergistically across family, community, employer, and institutional frameworks, migrant workers have greater resilience to face the complex work pressures and emotional challenges that accompany migration.

3. The Relationship between Motivation and Social Support in the Formation of Work Resilience

Job resilience among migrant workers does not emerge instantly, but rather is formed through a dynamic combination of internal motivation and external social support. The findings of this study demonstrate that job resilience is the result of a long process that includes establishing work meaning, managing emotions, and adapting to a stressful, cross-cultural work environment.

Motivation was the primary foundation that drove informants to make the decision to migrate and persist in their jobs, even though they were far from their comfort zones. The drive to

improve their families' standard of living, make their parents happy, and build a future were strong reasons that sustained their work ethic in difficult circumstances. Informants revealed that this motivation evolved from a reactive to a proactive one, from simply wanting to escape the pressures of work at home to the hope of achieving financial independence and social recognition.

"When Eid comes, I'm really sad, but I endure it because I think they'll be happy with the fruits of my labor."

This kind of altruistic motivation is in line with the concept *Positive Organizational Behavior* (Luthans, 2002) where hope, self-efficacy, and optimism become psychological capital for remaining productive in difficult situations. When motivation is linked to a meaning greater than mere income, such as family honor or social independence, workers will be more resilient in the face of physical and emotional stress. However, motivation does not work alone; work resilience is also supported by the presence of stable and layered social support. Informants mentioned that regular communication with family provides emotional balance and a source of calm amidst isolation. Furthermore, solidarity with fellow migrants creates a safe space for sharing burdens, provides emotional validation, and strengthens a sense of belonging and not being alone. This is *bonding social capital* which strengthens psychological resilience. Furthermore, a positive relationship with an employer who provides hands-on training, tolerates rest periods, and treats workers with respect, is a form of *linking social capital*. This type of support not only reinforces a sense of appreciation but also fosters workers' confidence to learn and develop. This aligns with findings (Morelli et al., 2015) that emphasize the importance of a combination of emotional and instrumental support in

building workers' psychological well-being.

Previous research (Ho et al., 2022) showed that informal forums among migrants act as emotional safe spaces that strengthen workers' mental resilience. Similarly, (Pham et al., 2024) emphasized that perceptions of appreciation and involvement in workplace decision-making significantly influence worker resilience. When workers feel involved, treated fairly, and supported in their work-learning process, their morale and resilience are higher.

The transformation experienced by the informant, from initially being afraid of blood and disgusted by wounds to being able to professionally treat injured patients and the elderly, is concrete evidence that work resilience can be developed and strengthened. This occurs through the simultaneous action of internal drive (motivation) and external reinforcement (social support).

Thus, the relationship between motivation and social support is not isolated but rather interacts and reinforces each other in shaping work resilience. When workers have a strong sense of purpose and are surrounded by a supportive social environment, their ability to cope with stress, adapt, and survive in the migrant workforce becomes stronger and more sustainable.

CONCLUSION

Migrant workers' job resilience is not formed in a single instance, but rather the result of a mutually reinforcing interaction between internal and external factors. In the context of Indonesian domestic migrant workers in Taiwan, two key elements are work motivation and social support. Work motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation such as the desire to improve one's family's standard of living, is the primary driving force driving individuals to persist in challenging work situations. Over time, this motivation develops into a

passion for learning, improving skills, and building a better future. Meanwhile, social support from family, fellow migrants, and employers plays a crucial role in maintaining emotional balance and strengthening psychological resilience, including direct training, recognition of competence, and institutional support from agencies such as the Indonesian Migrant Workers Association (BP2MI).

Thus, migrant workers' job resilience is the result of a synergy between strong internal motivation and supportive social support, which enables them to survive, thrive, and remain productive amidst work pressures and cultural alienation.

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