

**THE MIGRATION OF ASEAN'S WORKER TO JAPAN:  
THE IMPACT TO THE SOCIAL, CULTURE AND POLITIC OF JAPAN**

Azhar Harun, Shafee Saad

Universiti Utara Malaysia

**Abstract**

*The research will analyze the causes and consequences of the recent dramatic increases of migration from Malaysia and selected ASEAN countries (Thailand and Philippine) to Japan. The research aims at learning some general characteristics of the migrations, and linking them to theoretical explanations of migration and its place in the process of globalization. The research main question is; how do Malaysian and selected ASEAN countries migrants enter to work in Japan both legally and illegally? And what are the possible consequences for the receiving countries, in terms of social, cultural and political change? To answer these questions, the researcher have to do some field research both in Japan as a host country and in Malaysia and selected ASEAN countries (Thailand and Philippine) as a home country. Three equation has form as hypothesis to answer these question. The output of the study shown that the largest number of ASEAN country's emigrants, will be created more social problem and also affected the culture changed to the Japanese society than the smaller number of ASEAN country's emigrants.*

**Key word:** ASEAN, Worker, Migration, Japan, Social, Culture and Politic

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The migration became to be the important problem of the period currently. These is because the lack of the work in their respective country. Most of workers from the ASEAN countries entered to developed countries like US, Japan or Korea to obtain the work (Ministry of Labor Malaysia, 2004). Japan also become to be the popular country and as the target of the foreign worker from ASEAN countries to enter. The admission of foreign workers has become an important issue in the Japan. Although Japan has had a long history of relative isolation, the shortage of labour in certain occupations and jobs has drawn foreign workers into the country in increasing numbers. They have grown from a few thousand in the early 1980s to current estimates of anywhere from 60,000 to 100,000. Almost all of these workers are working in the country illegally. Because of their illegal status, most receive wages and other terms of employment that are significantly inferior to those of Japanese workers in the same occupations.

The growing presence of foreign workers in Japan is closely related to the tightening of the labour market and the consequent wage explosion. Their presence is still very small, insignificant in comparison to other industrialised countries, but the growth has been rapid, and likely to continue if state policy permits it. If the unfilled vacancy estimates of the Ministry of Labor truly reflect labour shortages, then the number of potential jobs for foreign workers are already double to triple the present number of foreigners overstaying in the country plus those who have been admitted as trainees.

Labor shortage in Japan made the new rule which come to grips with the slightly opened the door for foreign labor coming to Japan. Increased life expectancy of age accompanied by a decline in birthrate, bring labor shortages in Japan. Although industrial enterprises strive to reduce their dependence on

human power and replace them with robots, but in the health service sector cannot be done. Shortage of health workers in Japan could be make national health service sector has become paralyzed. In initially, Japan only open up opportunities for foreign workers with specialized capabilities to be working in Japan.

At the end of the 80's where the Japanese economy in various areas has progress, the need for labor has increased rapidly. The using of foreign labor is felt as the right solution to overcome the decline of workforce. The data getting from the organization in international training association of Japan in 2004, 79.2% as large as the current Japanese foreign workers originating from China, followed by Indonesia (8.8%) and the remaining is Vietnam, Philippines and Thailand. Most of these migrant has working in the textile and clothing manufacturing, machinery and metal manufacturing, agriculture, fisheries and construction of buildings sectors. (Organization for Economic cooperation and Development, 2004)

### 1.1 MIGRATION IN JAPAN

The number of foreigners entering Japan has been rising sharply. The number of foreign arrivals in 1992 was four million, the number of foreigners registered as living in the country was 1.3 million, and the number of foreigners who overstayed the tourist visas most foreigners use to enter Japan was about 300,000.

There are only about 100,000 legal foreigners among the country's 62 million workers. About one-fourth of these legal foreign workers are entertainers, one-fourth are engaged in international services, including English teaching, and 10 percent are engineers.

Japan does not permit the importation of unskilled foreign workers, but it is believed that 300,000 to 500,000 illegal foreign workers in the country, mostly filling so-called 3-D jobs--dirty, dangerous, and difficult. Over 60,000 foreign workers were apprehended in 1992 and 1993, with which two-thirds were from three home countries namely, Malaysia, Iran, and Korea. Each country accounted for about 14,000 apprehensions. About four-fifths of the illegal foreign workers were men, in which half of them were working in construction and one-fourth were working in factories. Mean while, One-third of the women detected were hostesses, and another one-sixth were working in factories.

### 1.2 DATA OF THE FOREIGN POPULATION IN JAPAN

The number of registered foreigners working in Japan is 1,778,462 as of December 2001, which is 1.4% of the Japanese population. The number of foreign females is 945,149 (53%). The number of those with permanent residency status is 684,853 (Table 1). The number of foreigners who have overstayed their visas is 224,067 as of 1 January 2002 (Table 2).

Table 1: The numbers of registered foreigners as of December 2001

	Korea	China	Brazil	<u>Philippines</u>	Peru	US	Total
Male	298,984	164,803	145,924	24,552	27,512	29,265	833,313
Female	333,421	216,422	120,038	132,115	22,540	16,979	945,149
Total	632,405	381,225	265,962	156,667	50,052	46,244	1,778,462
Permanent Residents	503,610	62,838	20,291	26,994	11,064	6915	684,853

(Source: Japan Immigration Association, *Statistics on the Foreigners Registered in Japan 2002*)

Table 2: The numbers of overstaying foreigners as of 1 January 2002.

	Korea	<u>Philippines</u>	Mainland China	<u>Thailand</u>	<u>Malaysia</u>	Taiwan	Total
Male	20,747	10,456	15,749	8,020	5,280	4,346	118,122
Female	34,417	19,193	11,833	8,905	4,817	4,644	105,945
Total	55,164	29,649	27,582	16,925	10,097	8,990	224,067

(Source: Ministry of Justice, 2002)

## 2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The research will analyse the causes and consequences of the recent dramatic increases of migration from Selected ASEAN Countries to Japan. The ASEAN countries are include 10 countries, likes Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippine, Singapore, Brunei, Myanmar, Kampuchea, Vietnam and Laos. But, this research will selected some ASEAN countries like, Malaysia, Thailand and Philippine. This is because, from the above data shown many people from Malaysia, Thailand and Philippine enter to work in Japan.

The research aims at learning some general characteristics of the migrations, and linking them to theoretical explanations of migration and its place in the process of globalization. The research main question is; how do the people from Selected ASEAN Countries migrants enter to work in Japan? And what are the possible consequences for the receiving countries, in terms of social, cultural and political change? To answer these questions, the researcher have to do some field research in Japan as a host country and some selected ASEAN countries as a home country.

The specific of the objective study is to analyse the possible consequences of Malaysian emigrants and selected ASEAN countries emigrants on Japan, in terms of social, cultural and political change.

## 3. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The research will include some field research both in Japan as a host country and in Malaysia and selected ASEAN countries (Thailand and Philippine) as a home country. The data will base on secondary data and primary data as below:

### 3.1 Secondary Data:

1. Library research on material related to the Malaysian people migration and selected ASEAN countries people to Japan.
2. Data compile by government agency (Malaysia) including Department of Statistics, Department of Immigration and Embassy of Malaysia and selected ASEAN countries in Tokyo.
3. Data also compile from International agency namely, Embassy of Japan, Thailand and Philippine in Kuala Lumpur and Department of Statistics in Bangkok (Thailand), Manila (Philippine) and Tokyo (Japan).
- 4.

### 3.2 Primary Data:

1. Data from interviewing government agency, Ministry officer, embassy officer from Embassy of Malaysia, Thailand and Philippine in Tokyo and Embassy of Japan, Thailand and Philippine in Kuala Lumpur. Data also will get from interviewing custom officer
2. Data from interviewing Japanese company who have experience in the Malaysian and selected ASEAN country's worker migration.

To obtain the good results, the data from above methodology will be analysed through the regression, crosstabulation and frequency technique by SPSS Program (The System Package for Social Sciences Program). And for facilitate in analysed these data, several models will be formed from the objective studies. These models will be tested through the several hypothesis that will be formed. With this empirical results, it could support strongly to this study. These methodology has choosing because it expected to give the data and the exact result with support the objective study.

## 4. LITERATURE REVIEWS

The literature survey on past and on-going studies on migration of ASEAN countries' people to the East countries like Japan and Korea has been carried out after the Prime Minister of Malaysia introduced 'Look East Policy'. The literature survey can be show are;

The paper from International Symposium at Nihon University (1994) has discuss the problems involved in managing migration during the Pacific century. The paper discuss on the challenge of managing migration to Japan. From the paper, the number of foreigners entering Japan has been rising sharply. The number of foreign arrivals in 1992 was four million, the number of foreigners registered as living in the country was 1.3 million, and the number of foreigners who overstayed the tourist visas most foreigners use to enter Japan was about 300,000. The focus of the papers was on foreigners who work in Japan. Japan is well aware of the gap between its policy of no unskilled foreign workers and the reality that at least several hundred thousand such workers are at work. However, there seems to be little consensus for a large-scale immigration solution. If legal immigration to Japan were at British levels of 0.1 percent of the population, Japan would accept about 125,000 immigrants annually. If Japan took as many immigrants as the US, it would accept 500,000 immigrants annually, adding about 0.4 percent to the population annually via immigration. However, there was widespread criticism of the short-term perspective through which most Asian policy makers evaluate migration issues, producing many skeptics of the notion that there will be yet another Asian miracle in finding a mutually beneficial way to manage labor migration and avoid unanticipated results.

Hachiro NISHIOKA, Keiko WAKABAYASHI, Hisashi INABA, Chizuko YAMAMOTO (1991) focused on the migration in Japan in their survey on 'Trends of Migration in Japan'. The sample in this survey include 34,781 persons from the 265 census districts in Japan. They produced Markov transition matrices with one-year/five year transition probabilities The result from this survey, from comparison between stationary distribution of one-year matrix and of five-year matrix, it was shown that from 1985 to 1990 interregional migration patterns in Japan changed toward decentralization of population. Since it was observed that on the average 23 per cent of each regional resident are stayer who never moves from birth place, they tried to apply the mover-stayer model to their migration data and calculated ultimate distributions. The trend of decentralization of population was again supported by the mover-stayer model. Up to 1960's, the causes in which people migrated from non-metropolitan to metropolitan areas had been greatest in magnitude. The main reasons for in-migration urban is "occupation",

"schooling" and "marriage". Since 1980's, it is interesting to note that the migration within metropolitan areas has been largest in volume. The main reason for in-migration is providing the better residential and natural environment.

Manolo I, Abella (1998) from International Labor Organization (ILO) discussed on the Labor Migration to Japan and the East Asian NICs in his article 'Issues in Contemporary Migration in Asia'. From his article, he find, labor shortages in the dynamic growth centers in the region have created another opening for labor migration which is potentially larger than the one that the oil boom created in the Gulf. The growth during the 1980s of migration flows to Japan and the Newly Industrializing Countries (NICs) of East Asia -namely, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Japan - have been impressive and are much larger than what official records reveal. Official records of eight selected Asian countries of emigration show that about 150,000 workers left in 1988 bound for one of these countries compared to only about 30,000 in 1980. We suspect that if clandestine migration is taken into account the actual numbers could easily be double these reported figures. In Japan alone, labor shortages are widespread in spite of the considerable relocation of labor-intensive industries to neighboring countries through direct foreign investment and in spite of the automation and robotization of many industrial processes. The development of this new migration front has raised a number of new issues and problems. One is the lack of legitimate avenues for the entry of unskilled labor; or where legal entry is possible, very unrealistic quotas have been set on the numbers of those who are permitted to come in. This has led, for example, to a large clandestine flow to Japan where thousands of small enterprises are desperate for workers and where wages are as much as 60 times those in China, 16 times those in the Philippines and eight times those in Malaysia. Japanese authorities estimate that there may be as many as 300,000 foreigners working illegally in the country today. They include many thousands of Chinese workers from the mainland as well as people from Taiwan, Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, Bangladesh, Pakistan and even Iran.

All three literature was discussed the increase in Japanese migration are happen quickly, with this increase has caused problems for Japan, particularly the problems of society, culture and politics. With this discussion, it has helped researchers to developing research hypotheses in this study as in model part.

## 5. MODEL OF THE STUDY

From the above objective and literature review parts, we can create three equations of hypothesis. For easy to understand, these hypothesis will create in the function form. Variables in these hypothesis will separate to independent variables and dependent variables. The empirical method that will be use to test or analyze these hypothesis is Multiple Regression. The three equation of hypothesis, can show as below:

1.  $SOCIAL_J = f(EM_M, EM_T, EM_P)$
2.  $CULTURE_J = f(EM_M, EM_T, EM_P)$
3.  $POLITIC_J = f(EM_M, EM_T, EM_P)$

### 5.1 DEFINITION OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

1. Malaysian Emigrants ( $EM_M$ ) The number of Malaysian peoples who work in Japan by year from 1992 – 2002 (both legally and illegally emigrants)
2. Thai Emigrants ( $EM_T$ ) The number of Thai peoples who work in Japan by year from 1992 – 2002 (both legally and illegally emigrants)

3. Philippine Emigrants ( $EM_P$ ) The number of Philippine peoples who work in Japan by year  
From 1992 – 2002 (both legally and illegally emigrants)

5.2 *Definition of Dependent Variables*

1. Japan's Social ( $SOCIAL_J$ ) the possible consequences to Japan social change, because of Malaysian, Thailand and Philippine emigrants [Qualitative Data]
2. Japan's Cultural ( $CULTURE_J$ ) the possible consequences to Japan cultural change, because of Malaysian, Thailand and Philippine emigrants [Qualitative Data]
3. Japan Political ( $POLITIC_J$ ) The possible consequences to Japan political change, because of Malaysian, Thailand and Philippine emigrants [Qualitative Data]

**6. OUTPUT OF THE STUDY**

6.1 *Equation 1*

$$\begin{aligned} SOCIAL_J = & -138.647 - 0.00598EM_M + 0.02416EM_T^{**} \\ & \quad \quad \quad (-1.046) \quad \quad \quad (2.845) \\ & \quad \quad \quad + 0.009170EM_P^{**} \\ & \quad \quad \quad (2.470) \end{aligned}$$

Note \*\* Significant at 95 % level

\*\*\* Significant at 99 % level

F – Test = 3.319\* (\* Significant at 90 % level)

R - Square = 0.587

This equation try to analyses the affect of the select ASEAN countries emigrants to the Japan social life. The number of each country's emigrants may be effect the Japan's social life in aspect of social problem like drugs, gangsterism or robbery. This hypothesis expected that the largest number of ASEAN country's emigrants like Philippine ( $EM_P$ ), will be affected more problem to the Japan social than the smaller number of ASEAN country's emigrants (Thailand and Malaysia). And, between Thailand and Malaysia, the number of Thai emigrants are larger than Malaysian emigrants, so this hypothesis expected that Thai emigrants may be make more problem than Malaysian emigrants. The output of the study shows that the Philippine emigrants are the major factor influencing the Japan social life. It is followed by Thai and Malaysian emigrants. This output has supported the early hypothesis that the number of the country's emigrants affect the Japan social life in many aspects like drugs, gangsterism or robbery. Because the Philippine emigrant number is the largest, this factor ( $EM_P$ ) is the major determinant in influencing the Japan social life ( $SOCIAL_J$ ).



## 6.2 Equation 2

$$\begin{aligned} \text{CULTURE}_J &= -150.052 - 0.00365\text{EM}_M + 0.01390\text{EM}_T^{***} \\ &\quad (-0.629) \quad (4.245) \\ &\quad + 0.02040\text{EM}_P^* \\ &\quad (2.052) \end{aligned}$$

Note \* Significant at 90 % level

\*\*\* Significant at 99 % level

F – Test = 10.757 \*\*\* (\*\*\*) Significant at 99 % level)

R - Square = 0.822

This equation tries to analyse the affect of the selected ASEAN country's emigrants to the Japan culture (CULTURE<sub>J</sub>). The number of each country's emigrants also may be affected the Japan's culture in aspect of culture change. The output of the study has supported the early hypothesis. This hypothesis expected that the largest number of ASEAN country's emigrants (Thailand and Philippine) will be affected some Japanese culture changed than the smaller number of ASEAN country's emigrants (Malaysia). The output shows that the emigrants from Thailand and Philippine has significant with the Japanese culture variable. Many of emigrants from Thailand open the restaurant in Tokyo, especially Tom yam restaurant (Tom Yam is Thai's special food). This kind of food became to be the major food for Japanese people. Japanese people also interest in Philippine's food like seafood. Although some culture like foods from Thailand and Philippine can influence the Japanese food, but all of these factors cannot influencing in the other Japan culture. This is because, the Japan people has an unique culture that cannot be influencing by the culture from another countries.

## 6.3 Equation 3

$$\begin{aligned} \text{POLITIC}_J &= 14921.765 + 0.628\text{EM}_M + 0.07966\text{EM}_T - 1.963\text{EM}_P \\ &\quad (0.673) \quad (0.151) \quad (-1.229) \end{aligned}$$

F – Test = 1.908

R - Square = 0.450

This equation tries to analyse the affect of the selected ASEAN country's emigrants to the Japan politic (POLITIC<sub>J</sub>). The number of each country's emigrants also may be affected the Japan's politic in aspect of worker association rule or election problem. The output shows, all factors (independent variables) do not significant with the dependent variable (POLITIC<sub>J</sub>). This mean that the output of the study did not supported the early hypothesis. It shows that all factors like EM<sub>M</sub>, EM<sub>T</sub> and EM<sub>P</sub> do not influencing Japan politic (POLITIC<sub>J</sub>). This is because, the Japan political change or any movement in politic will be control by Japan peoples themselves.

## 7. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has utilized selected ASEAN countries and Japan's economy time series data for the period 1992 – 2002 to ascertain the influence of a number of variables that are commonly cited by previous researchers as important determinants of the migration growth from selected ASEAN countries to Japan. (Asia weekly Magazine, 2002)

The models of all three equations used social, culture, politic in Japan as the dependent variable and total of migration worker from selected ASEAN countries as independent variables. The study found that increase in total of emigrant from Philippine and Thailand will created the social problem, like drugs, gangsterism or robbery. The increase in total of emigrant from Philippine and Thailand also influence the culture changed in the Japanese community. This is because, the totals of Philippine emigrant are the largest, followed by the Thailand emigrant and the Malay emigrant are the smallest. For peace, The Japan government should consider or more control to the Philippine and Thailand emigrant.

Japan appreciates the contribution of migrant workers to help the economic development of Japan, particularly in the manufacturing sector. They become to be the part of the social institutions in Japan. However, the entry of foreign workers into the country has sparked a variety of polemic among the people in this country. A variety of negative effects were felt by most of the adult population. Rising crime in Japan is said to be many years due to the influx of foreigners into Japan. This case is because most of them came to this country in order to get rich quickly. Therefore, they are willing to do whatever job even illegal. For example they will do involve with robbery, kidnapping and others to get more money. Indeed, common crime in areas inhabited by them. In addition, the population lives in that area to be miserable. This is due to the attitude of not respecting cultural and religious communities. With this, they will cause a conflict with the local population. Their manufacture is certainly angered residents who eventually trigger fights and so on. Besides that, local jobs would be affected because most employers want to hire workers low wages. Thus the employer will reduce local employment but at the same time increasing the number of foreign workers. Low wages to foreign workers have always been the main cause for this problem occurs. Influx of foreigners into Japan has created a chronic social problem. Therefore, the authorities should ensure that immigrants will not be a problem in the future. With this fate locals more secure. Indeed, the undeniable arrival of foreign immigrants has a negative impact on the social life of the community in the country.

In terms of society factor, an increasing of immigrants both legal and illegal in Japan as restaurant workers, factory workers, grocery workers, laborers or servants will always cause problems to the Japanese people. Migrant in Japan appears to be a bad effect on the eyes of the Japanese. Results of the survey note that almost Japanese population rejects foreign workers in Japan. An increasing number of foreign workers could make them afraid. Have an opinion from the group in Japan, when Japanese accept foreign labor, the opportunity for Japanese people themselves will become narrower, the young men will only work on the "3K" - kitsui (rough work), kitanai (dirty worker / low) and kiken (occupational hazard) (Ministry of Labor Malaysia, 2004). Japanese people also fear the advent of the issue of terrorism and evil foreigners as was reported in the Japanese media.

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