

## Migrant Labor Determinants: Do Socio-Economic Factors Affect?

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### Abstract

*This study aims to determine the social and economic variables that influence workers to become migrant workers. This research was conducted in Central Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara. As a sample in this study, we surveyed 100 people, consisting of 50 ex-migrant workers and 50 local workers. The analytical tool used was logit analysis. The estimation results show that the influential social variables are gender, age, marital status, and education. Economic variables that affect former migrant workers include ownership of savings, ownership of loans, ownership of agricultural land, and ownership of livestock, all of which have a negative effect. The policy implications of this research are the need for new regulations or revisions to previous regulations to improve human resources at the time of pre-placement. This regulation should involve training in language skills and the abilities required for the relevant field of work to increase competitiveness. Furthermore, policies to empower migrant workers post-placement should be implemented to provide more significant opportunities and support for working or starting businesses in their home countries.*

### Keywords:

migrant workers; local labor; economic; social

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## INTRODUCTION

Migrant workers are a phenomenon of international migration. Migration refers to the movement of people from one region to another, and it can be classified into two types: internal and international migration (Haryono, 2017). According to the Indonesian Migrant Workers Protection Agency (BP2MI, 2020), Indonesia placed over a quarter of a million citizens as migrant workers in various countries from 2014-2020, despite a 59% decrease in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) is a significant contributor to Indonesia's migrant worker population, with the fourth highest number of placements in 2019, according to data from the Indonesian Migrant Workers Protection Agency (BPPMI). However, regarding the ratio of migrant workers to the total population, West Nusa Tenggara ranks first at 1.22%, compared to East Java, which has the highest number of migrant workers in absolute terms at only 0.35%. Central Lombok Regency is one area that provides placement services for migrant workers in West Nusa Tenggara Province. In 2018, it opened the One-Stop Integrated Service (LTSP-P2TKI), which increased the number of Indonesian migrant workers from Central Lombok. The Head of the Manpower Placement Division of the Central Lombok Manpower and Transmigration Agency reported that in the first quarter of 2018, about 3000 people were placed abroad as Indonesian migrant workers, with 90-100 people registering to become Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI). In addition, the Central Lombok Manpower and Transmigration Agency placed 9,192 migrant workers in 2019. Based on Table 2 data, Jonggat District had the highest number of migrant workers in 2019.

The existence of migrant workers has both positive and negative impacts. According to Wulan et al. (2018), migration can be categorized as planned change (planned social change). However, it can also become an expected and unintended change in international migration. Intended change can be interpreted as a positive impact on the migration process. However, if it is not planned correctly, it can cause unintended change resulting in social costs of migration. Several studies show that changes in family function and structure have led to an increase in divorce rates among families and communities of origin of migrants. This condition is considered a negative impact of international migration. The phenomenon of migrant workers, according to Tamtiari (2016), is recognized to solve labor problems in Indonesia and increase the country's foreign exchange. Mainly, working abroad helps improve the fate of migrant workers and their households in their areas of origin. However, migrant workers also have a negative impact. There is a significant negative impact on the relationship and integrity of the household from a socio-psychological perspective. One of these impacts is divorce because someone who is left behind for migration tends to experience stress and psychological disturbances (Tamtiari, 2016; Lu, 2012).

Studies have shown that children of migrant workers experience a decline in social skills, academic performance, and increased stress, despite the mother's high attachment and the excellent upbringing provided by the father (Puspitasari & Setioningsih, 2011; Indah Prastiwi, 2020). Furthermore, the duration of time that a mother spends as a

migrant worker impacts her child's well-being. Additionally, upon returning to their home regions, former migrant workers with low education levels have low productivity and struggle to compete with the local workforce in areas with high population densities and unemployment rates. Establishing a business in Indonesia can also be challenging due to limited access to financing for small businesses, prompting many ex-migrant workers to return to migration to avoid unemployment and provide for their families (Maksum, 2021). Moreover, migrant workers are vulnerable to occupational health and safety risks and sexual and psychological risks for both themselves and their families left behind, which can result in divorce (Simkhada et al., 2017).

Other impacts, as revealed by a 2015 study conducted by the Indonesian Tunas Alam Foundation (Santai) in Wanasaba Village, East Lombok district, include the negative consequences for children left behind by migrant worker parents. The study found that many children are forced to marry at an early age, with around 136 cases reported and approximately 100 couples consisting of children of fellow migrant workers. The Head of the Division for Child, Youth, and Community Empowerment at the Santai Foundation cited two contributing factors: the lack of parental supervision due to both parents working as migrant workers, and the economic problems experienced by children, leading them to hope that marriage can change their fate. However, becoming a migrant worker does not necessarily reduce poverty. Even though incomes may increase, poverty rates remain high due to spending on housing and vehicles rather than investing in businesses for future development.

Even though migration has a negative impact on families, many people still want to pursue it. Understanding the driving factors behind workforce migration can help formulate programs to reduce the desire to migrate, given the negative impacts it can have. Simpson (2017) identifies that there are push and pull factors of migration. Push factors refer to conditions that encourage people to leave their country, while pull factors refer to conditions that attract them to migrate. Economic and non-economic factors influence both types. Sukamdi (2007) suggests two explanations for migration: the individual and structural approaches. Several studies have explored the topic, and Puspitasari (2010) suggests that age, income, original occupation, education level, marital status, and land ownership encourage people to become migrant workers. Workers migrate because they want to improve their families standard of living. From a macro perspective, Puspitasari & Kusreni (2017) state that factors affecting Indonesian labor migration abroad include the number of unemployed, GRDP per capita, the average length of education, and poverty. However, among these factors, the number of unemployed and poverty are the most significant drivers of Indonesian workers' migration abroad. Franc et al. (2019) indicate that the emigration rate responds quickly to changes in GDP per capita and the youth population's unemployment rate in the immigration country. The lack of jobs contribute to an increase in poverty and, thus, the number of unemployed. According to Hajian et al. (2020), who reviewed twenty-five articles on migration, push and pull theory was the most popular way to describe the driving factors behind migration. They classified factors into three categories: macro,

meso, and micro-level. Poor income, unfavorable socio-economic conditions, political instability, lack of professional and educational opportunities, and family and personal concerns are common reasons for migration. However, Bidwell et al. (2014) found that salary, career progression, and poor working conditions were not significant migration drivers for health workers. In South Africa, migration is driven by security, crime, and racial tensions.

Various factors drive Indonesian workers to become migrant workers, including personal needs, family economic conditions, limited job opportunities in Indonesia, and the desire to seek work experience and higher income. Husniawati (2017) found that personal needs and expectations are the dominant factors, the most important being the need for higher income. Rizqi (2018) identified low education level as a determinant of a person's decision to become a migrant worker. It offers an opportunity to earn a higher salary, save money, and invest in businesses and homes in Indonesia. Intan & Yuliaty (2016) and Wafirotin (2016) suggest that individual motives, family, and driving factors from the area of origin and pull factors from the destination area also play a significant role. Family, in particular, influences a person's decision to become a migrant worker, with many respondents having family members who are also migrant workers. Raharto (2017) identified three reasons women decide to work abroad: the choice of activities, the person leaving, and economic factors.

Sometimes, school-age girls become migrant workers due to their parents' economic conditions. Migration decisions are also influenced by job experience abroad, income, marital status, family burdens, and length of stay in the destination country (Waridin, 2007). Other research suggests that migration decisions are influenced by satisfaction with personal finances, household asset index, and standard of living (Aslany & Sommerfelt, 2020). The existence of inequality, socio-economic injustice, and lack of opportunities to get a better livelihood also affect migration decisions, as well as social networks such as friends, family, and neighbors who can provide information on migrant destination countries (Dinbabo et al., 2021). In addition, a study in Indonesia found that the population's decision to undertake internal migration in Indonesia is based on income, employment status, education, age, number of family members, marital status, residential ownership status, and agricultural land ownership (Khoeri & Atmanti, 2021)."

Previous studies have mainly focused on general socio-economic factors, such as income, education, gender, and age, concerning migrant workers' decision-making processes. However, there needs to be more exploration of the role of ownership of assets, such as savings, loans, and livestock, as a factor in workers' migration decisions. Using the Sustainable Livelihood Framework approach, this study addresses this gap by incorporating a more comprehensive understanding of economic factors, including income and asset ownership. By identifying and analyzing the relationship between asset ownership and migrant workers' decisions to migrate, this study can provide new insights into the factors influencing workers' migration decisions.

It is necessary to control the departure of migrant workers to minimize the problem. One of the controls is investigating the factors that affect the decisions of

migrant workers. This study examines the social and economic effects on the decisions of migrant workers and local workers. This study utilizes social variables such as gender, age, marital status, number of family members, and education. The economic variables in this study are income, occupation type, savings ownership, loan ownership, agricultural land ownership, and livestock ownership. Information on these factors is expected to construct policies to develop a more sustainable workforce both economically and social-psychologically.

## METHODS

This study employs primary quantitative data and qualitative data collected through a questionnaire. The unit of analysis is individuals who have worked either as migrant workers or local workers, irrespective of their gender. They provide data or information based on the variables used in this study. As a result, this study aims to identify the socio-economic factors that affect the decisions of migrant workers.

Previous research has mainly focused on migrant workers. However, this study contributes to empirical research by including samples of both former migrant workers and local workers to gain a more comprehensive understanding of their decision-making process. The population of this study includes all ex-migrant workers and local workers in Perina Village. Therefore, the sample for this study comprises 100 individuals, consisting of 50 ex-migrant workers and 50 local workers.

This study uses non-probability sampling with the convenience method as the sampling technique. The research was conducted in 2020 using a survey method, with ex-migrant and local workers as the dependent variable and socio-economic variables as the independent variable. The social variables include gender, age, marital status, number of family members, and education. In contrast, the economic variables include income, occupation type, savings ownership, loan ownership, agricultural land ownership, and livestock ownership.

This study uses logit regression analysis, as described in previous research by Puspisanti (2014). Dependent variable predicting the variable on a nominal scale: 1 for ex-migrant workers and 0 for local workers.

In general, the equations of the logit regression model are as follows:

$$\ln \frac{p}{1-p} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_i + \beta_2 X_i + \beta_3 X_i + \beta_4 X_i + \beta_5 X_i + \beta_6 X_i + \beta_7 X_i + \beta_8 X_i + \beta_9 X_i + \beta_{10} X_i + \beta_{11} X_i + e \quad (1)$$

Where 1 denotes ex-migrant worker, 0 denotes local worker;  $X_1$  denotes gender;  $X_2$  denotes age;  $X_3$  denotes marital status;  $X_4$  denotes household size;  $X_5$  denotes education;  $X_6$  denotes income;  $X_7$  denotes job;  $X_8$  denotes savings ownership;  $X_9$  denotes loan ownership;  $X_{10}$  denotes agricultural land ownership;  $X_{11}$  denotes livestock ownership; and  $e$  denotes error term.

Therefore, the model will analyze the effect of the independent variables individually. This test is used to observe the effect of the independent variables on the dependent

variable simultaneously by referring to the significant Chi2 probability value with an alpha of 5% (0.05). The Pseudo R-Squared.

Test is conducted to see how all independent variables can explain the dependent variable. The test is run by looking at the Pseudo R-Squared value. This test is also used to test the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable individually. The test is run by looking at the p-value of each significant variable with an alpha of 5% (0.05).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Empirical Result

Perina Village is in the Jonggat District, Central Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara. The village has a population of 3604, consisting of 1721 males and 1883 females. The village has 176 hectares of rice fields and 112.70 hectares of dry land. Most of the population work as farmers and farm laborers, with 874 individuals working as farmers, 2,079 as farm laborers, and only three having farming businesses. However, many individuals find that their farming income is insufficient to meet their daily needs. Finding work outside the planting and harvesting seasons is complex, and meeting daily expenses, such as paying for their children's schooling, is challenging. Many become migrant workers to fulfill their needs and expectations, such as building homes. This condition is particularly true for households where individuals marry at a young age, quit school, or still live with their parents.

Table 1 provides a detailed description of the respondents' social and economic variables. Many ex-migrant worker respondents are 70% male and 30% female, while local workers are 58% male and 42% female. Table 1 shows that those over 30 dominate local workers, while ex-migrant workers are predominantly between 17 and 30. The marital status of ex-migrants and local workers is similar, with married individuals being the majority. The number of family members shows that ex-migrant workers are predominantly in households with more than three people, while local workers are primarily in households with 1-3 family members. Most ex-migrant workers have a junior high school education or lower, while local workers are predominantly high school graduates, followed by elementary school, junior high school, and college graduates. The income variable shows that 48% of local worker respondents have incomes below 1 million, 40% between 1-2 million, and 12% above 2 million. For ex-migrant workers, the majority (52%) have incomes below one million, 44% between two and three million, and only 4% with incomes over two million.

Table 1 also shows that 76% of ex-migrant worker respondents work in non-farming occupations, while the remaining 24% work as farmers. Among local workers, 44% work as farmers, while the remaining 56% work in non-farming occupations. Most local worker respondents have more significant savings than ex-migrant workers, indicating that most respondents do not have savings. Loans: Regarding loan ownership, most ex-migrants, and local workers do not have loans. 80% of ex-migrant worker

respondents do not own agricultural land, whereas 62% have agricultural land, indicating that local workers have more significant agricultural land ownership. Additionally, local workers have 48% higher livestock ownership, while ex-migrant workers have only 8%.

**Table 1. The Ex-Migrant Workers and Local Workers Description**

Category		Ex-Migrant Workers	Local worker
		Percentage	Percentage
Age	17-30	40	60
	>30	60	40
Gender	Male	70	58
	Female	30	42
Marital status	Unmarried	34	24
	Married	60	64
	Widowed	6	10
Family number	1-3	52	48
	>3	48	52
Education	Elementary school	32	22
	Secondary school	42	18
	High school	26	52
	Undergraduate	-	8
Income	< 1 million	52	48
	1-2 million	44	40
	>2 million	4	12
Occupation	Farmer	24	44
	Non-Farmer	76	56
Saving ownership	Yes	10	46
	No	90	56
Loan ownership	Yes	16	38
	No	84	62
Livestock ownership	Yes	8	48
	No	92	52
Agricultural land ownership	Yes	20	38
	No	80	62

Source: Data processed

Table 2. Logit Regression Output

TK	Coeff.	Standard Error	z	P>(z)	Interval Coefficient 95%	
Gender	2,481	0,941	2,62	0,008*	0,635	4,328
Age	-0,144	0,054	-2,61	0,009*	-0,253	-0,035
Marital Status	2,080	1,093	1,90	0,057***	-0,061	4,223
Household size	0,379	0,310	1,22	0,221	-0,228	0,987
Education	-0,565	0,150	-3,77	0,000*	-0,860	-0,271
Income	4,450	5,240	0,08	0,932	-9,830	1,070
Job	0,090	0,950	0,10	0,924	-1,771	1,952
Saving	-2,582	0,847	-3,05	0,002*	-4,243	-0,922
Loan	-1,959	0,838	-2,34	0,019**	-3,603	-0,315
Land	-2,292	0,953	-2,40	0,016**	-4,161	-0,423
Livestock	-1,893	0,960	-1,97	0,049**	-3,776	-0,010
C	8,104	2,375	3,41	0,001*	2,448	12,760
Logistic Regression				Obs	:	100
				Chi 2 Value	:	77,10
Log likelihood = -30,764				Prob. Chi2	:	0,0000
				R <sup>2</sup>	:	0,5562
Information :		Significant at $\alpha^*$		: 1%		
		Significant at $\alpha^{**}$		: 5%		
		Significant at $\alpha^{***}$		: 10%		

Table 2 exhibits the estimated logit regression of migrant workers, where the dependent variable is ex-migrant workers = 1 and local workers = 0. The independent variables include social variables and economic variables. The estimation results will be tested using both a priori and statistical tests. Table 3 presents the results of the a priori economic test, which is intended to determine the conformity of the regression coefficient with the theory. The test is conducted by comparing the results of the regression coefficient with the hypothesis. If the regression coefficient matches economic theory, the variable passes the a priori economic test. Table 3 shows that the variables in the study that passed the a priori economic test are occupation type, savings ownership, loan ownership, agricultural land ownership, and livestock ownership. Meanwhile, income did not pass the economic a priori test.



**Table 3. The Economic A priori Test**

Variable	Hypothesis	Result	Description
Gender	+/-	+	Pass the a priori test
Age	+/-	-	Pass the a priori test
Marital Status	+/-	+	Pass the a priori test
Household size	+	+	Pass the a priori test
Education	+/-	-	Pass the a priori test
Income	-	+	Do not Pass the a priori test
Job	+/-	+	Pass the a priori test
Saving	+/-	-	Pass the a priori test
Loan	+/-	-	Pass the a priori test
Land	+/-	-	Pass the a priori test
Livestock	+/-	-	Pass the a priori test

Furthermore, this study employs both partial and simultaneous tests. The partial test examines the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable individually. This test is executed by looking at the p-value of each significant variable. The variables significantly affecting the probability of becoming an ex-migrant worker are gender, age, marital status, education, savings ownership, loan ownership, agricultural land ownership, and livestock ownership. The variables of the number of family members, income, and occupation type do not significantly affect ex-migrant workers.

Next, this study simultaneously tests the effect of independent variables by looking at the probability value of  $\text{Chi}^2$ , which is significant with an alpha of 5% (0.05). Based on Table 2, the  $\text{Chi}^2$  value is 77.10, and it has a probability of 0.0000, more diminutive than 0.05. The Pseudo  $R^2$  value of 0.5562 means that all economic and social independent variables can explain the dependent variable of 55.62%. The remaining 44.38% is influenced by other variables outside the model used in this study. It means that all economic and social independent variables simultaneously influence ex-migrant workers.

## DISCUSSION

The dependent variable of ex-migrant workers serves as the reference analysis in the discussion. Gender, as a social aspect, has a coefficient value of 2.481. This result means that the probability of a male being a migrant worker is 2.481 times greater than that of a female. In other words, females are more likely to become local workers than men. These results align with Ardiyanto & Rijanta's (2014) research, which explains that male migrant workers find it difficult to find work in their area of origin. Sultana & Fatima (2017) propose that a lack of education creates hindrances for females to entering labor markets, and the enhancement of training and skill programs before migration can be fruitful for success.

The coefficient value of  $-0.144$  for age implies that the probability of an older person becoming a migrant worker is  $0.144$  times lower than that of a younger person. Therefore, younger people are more likely to become migrant workers, while older people tend to work locally. These findings align with previous studies by Puspitasari (2014), Sricharoen (2013), and Khoeri & Atmanti (2021), which suggest that migrant workers are typically aged between 19-28 years and in the productive age range.

According to our analysis, the variable for marital status has a coefficient value of  $2,080$ , indicating that the probability of a married person becoming a migrant worker is  $2,080$  times higher than that of an unmarried individual. This finding could be explained by the fact that many married migrant workers from Perina Village lack a home, capital, or funds to send their children to school, which compels them to seek work as migrant workers despite being married. This result contrasts with previous studies by Puspisanti (2014) and Khoeri & Atmanti (2021), which suggest that single individuals are more likely to migrate due to the absence of marriage ties. In contrast, married individuals prefer to stay close to their families.

One social variable we examined is the number of family members. Our analysis showed that the number of family members does not significantly affect a person's decision to migrate. This condition may be because the primary motivation for people to become migrant workers is to seek better opportunities, mainly owning a house.  $90\%$  of the respondents in our study still live in the same house as their parents. This finding contradicts the results of Refiani's (2006) study, which suggested that having more family members increases needs and may encourage someone to migrate for higher income.

The education variable has a coefficient value of  $-0.565$ . This result indicates that the probability of someone with higher education becoming a migrant worker is  $0.565$  times lower than someone with lower education. In other words, the higher a person's education, the less likely they are to become a migrant worker. This result is consistent with Puspisanti's (2014) study, which found that junior high and high school graduates are the dominant group among migrant workers in Indonesia. This condition may be because undergraduate degree individuals have more diverse employment opportunities. In Perina Village, migrant workers comprise  $42\%$  junior high school graduates,  $32\%$  elementary school graduates, and only  $26\%$  high school graduates.

Our analysis also showed that the income a person earned before becoming a migrant worker does not significantly impact their decision to migrate from an economic perspective. Many migrant workers perceive jobs such as farming, construction, and labor-intensive work as unpleasant and unsatisfactory, despite offering relatively high income. Those who return home as migrant workers and can build houses are often viewed as successful by their community. This finding contrasts with Puspitasari's (2010) study, which suggested that income is a crucial factor in the decision to migrate, as higher income in the destination area can encourage someone to migrate.

The type of occupation does not impact whether a person will become a migrant worker. This result is because the available jobs mainly relate to farming, casual labor,

and heavy labor, which offer similar wages. However, this result contrasts with Adriyanto's (2014) study, which suggests that occupation type is one of the determining factors for migration. According to Adriyanto, most migrant workers are farmers, laborers, entrepreneurs, and students from their areas of origin. On the other hand, the ownership of savings significantly affects ex-migrant workers, with a coefficient value of -2.582. This result means that the probability of someone with savings becoming a migrant worker is 2.582 times less than those without savings. In other words, having savings makes a person more likely to work locally, and the more assets or savings they have, the less interested they are in migrating.

Agricultural land ownership significantly affects ex-migrant workers, with a coefficient of -2,929. This result means that the probability of someone who owns agricultural land is 2.292 times less likely to become a migrant than one who does not own agricultural land. In other words, someone who owns agricultural land tends to become a local worker. This result aligns with Munir (2008) and Khoeri & Atmanti (2021). Munir (2008) explains that people who do not own land in their area of origin will migrate. The same finding also applies to livestock ownership, which significantly affects ex-migrant workers, with a coefficient of -1.893. The probability of owning livestock and becoming a migrant worker is 1,893 times smaller than that of one who does not own livestock. In other words, someone who owns livestock tends to become a local worker.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the social variables affecting ex-migrant workers are gender, age, marital status, and education. Specifically, gender, age, and marital status positively affect migrant workers, while education has a negative impact. On the other hand, the number of family members does not affect migrant workers. In terms of economic variables, savings, loans, agricultural land, and livestock ownership have a negative impact on ex-migrant workers, while income variables and occupation type do not affect them.

The policy implications of this research suggest the need for new regulations or revisions to existing ones that focus on improving human resources during pre-placement, including language skills and abilities in the field of work, to increase competitiveness. The study also suggests a need to focus on post-placement stages to empower migrant workers and provide more significant opportunities and support to work or start businesses in their home countries. To achieve these policy objectives, the government should establish Job Training Centers (BKL) at the city or district level and sub-district level to provide skill courses in various areas, such as agriculture and animal husbandry, to ensure that the new generation in these sectors has the necessary skills to become farmers or ranchers instead of migrant workers. The study also recommends that males improve their education by completing high school or attending skills courses offered by the government, especially since most migrant workers are junior high school

graduates. Additionally, youth and productive workers are advised to prioritize education in schools and skills courses to gain work experience and improve their job prospects. Those with higher education should seek to improve their skills to broaden their job opportunities. Married individuals are advised to look for work in their area of origin to stay closer to their families, particularly if they have children, as many children are abandoned by their parents, drop out of school, or marry early. Finally, people without loans are recommended to remain local workers. Those without agricultural land can collaborate with those who own agricultural businesses to help manage the land and raise cattle, with profit-sharing and mutual benefit.

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