

MODES OF INDEPENDENT MIGRATION OF INDONESIAN MIGRANT WORKERS IN ENTERING AND WORKING IN MALAYSIA THROUGH NON-PROCEDURAL CHANNELS

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Abstract

This study examines the modes of independent migration of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) in entering and working in Malaysia through non-procedural pathways. The phenomenon of non-procedural migration has become a significant concern as it increases the risk of rights violations, creates uncertainty in working conditions, and poses challenges for the government in monitoring and protecting migrant workers. This study aims to analyze the modes of independent migration undertaken by PMI, the factors driving non-procedural migration, and its implications for working conditions and legal protection in Malaysia. This research employs a qualitative approach using a case study method, involving in-depth interviews with migrant workers, migration observers, and government representatives, as well as analysis of relevant documents. The findings indicate that independent migration modes involve informal routes and intermediary networks that play a role in job placement, while the driving factors include socio-economic pressures, limited access to official migration mechanisms, and perceptions of bureaucratic delays. The implications of non-procedural migration include wage uncertainty, unsafe working conditions, minimal legal protection, and heightened vulnerability to exploitation and rights violations. The study also finds that the government faces difficulties in monitoring non-procedural migrant workers due to the lack of data, weak cross-sectoral coordination, and the dominance of informal networks. Based on these findings, the study recommends strengthening official migration procedures, increasing outreach and education for prospective migrant workers, enhancing legal protection for PMI in Malaysia, as well as promoting cross-border collaboration and community-based assistance. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexity of independent non-procedural migration and risk mitigation strategies for migrant workers, thereby helping to better protect the rights, safety, and welfare of migrant workers.

Keywords: *Indonesian Migrant Workers, non-procedural migration, working conditions, legal protection, Malaysia*

INTRODUCTION

International labor migration is a global phenomenon that is inseparable from the dynamics of development, economic inequality, and cross-border population mobility. For developing countries such as Indonesia, overseas labor migration is often viewed as a strategy to reduce unemployment and improve public welfare through remittances. Malaysia has become one of the main destination countries for Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) due to its geographical proximity, cultural and linguistic similarities, and high demand for labor in informal sectors such as plantations, construction, and domestic work. These conditions have driven continuous migration flows over time, both through official and unofficial channels. In practice, not all PMI migration processes comply with government-established mechanisms and procedures. The phenomenon of non-procedural migrant workers remains a serious issue faced by Indonesia to this day. Non-procedural PMI are those who work abroad without following official stages, such as lacking complete documentation, using inappropriate visas, or entering through unofficial routes. This situation places PMI in a highly vulnerable position to various forms of rights violations, ranging from labor exploitation and inadequate wages to human trafficking and violence (Yuvensianus Manek et al., 2023). One increasingly prominent form of non-procedural migration is independent migration, namely the departure of PMI initiated independently without going through Indonesian Migrant Worker Placement Companies (P3MI) or official government mechanisms. Independent migration is often driven by perceptions that official procedures are overly

complicated, time-consuming, and costly. Bureaucratic delays and limited access to information at the regional level further reinforce PMI's decision to pursue independent migration despite its high risks (Effendi & Triarda, 2024). Malaysia has become a primary destination for independent non-procedural migration due to gaps in border supervision and the presence of informal networks that facilitate departure and job placement. Studies in border areas such as West Kalimantan and the Riau Islands indicate that sea routes and informal border crossings are still frequently used by PMI to enter Malaysia illegally (Nur, 2020; Firdaus et al., 2024). This phenomenon demonstrates that strengthened state policies and supervision have not yet been fully effective in suppressing non-procedural migration practices, particularly those conducted independently.

Previous studies have largely focused on policy aspects, prevention efforts, and legal protection for non-procedural PMI. Some studies examine BP2MI strategies in preventing illegal departures (Aulija et al., 2025; Peny, 2025), while others highlight legal protection from a human rights perspective and the risks of human trafficking (Fauziah et al., 2024; Yuveniansus Manek et al., 2023). However, these studies tend to view non-procedural PMI primarily as victims of weak policies, without thoroughly examining how independent migration modes are carried out, including entry methods, work patterns, and survival strategies employed by PMI in Malaysia. The research gap lies in the limited discussion that specifically and systematically elaborates on the modes of independent migration undertaken by PMI, both in terms of departure processes, the involvement of informal networks, and independent work practices in the destination country. Understanding these modes is crucial for formulating more contextual and effective preventive policies. Without identifying the patterns and strategies used by PMI in independent non-procedural migration, existing policies risk remaining reactive and failing to address the root causes of the problem.

Based on the background outlined above, the main issues addressed in this study focus on the phenomenon of independent migration by Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) who enter and work in Malaysia through non-procedural means. The first issue concerns how independent migration modes are carried out by PMI in entering Malaysia without following official procedures, including the routes used and the role of informal networks that facilitate departure and job placement. The second issue relates to the factors that encourage PMI to choose independent non-procedural migration, whether stemming from socio-economic conditions, limited access to official mechanisms, or perceptions of bureaucratic delays. The third issue concerns the implications of independent non-procedural migration modes for working conditions and PMI protection in Malaysia, particularly in relation to vulnerability to rights violations and challenges faced by the government in monitoring and protecting migrant workers. Therefore, this study offers novelty by focusing on the analysis of independent migration modes undertaken by PMI in entering and working in Malaysia through non-procedural channels. This study does not merely view non-procedural migration as an administrative violation, but as a social phenomenon involving the rational choices of PMI, state limitations, and the dynamics of cross-border informal networks. Through this approach, the study is expected to contribute academically to the enrichment of labor migration studies and to serve as a reference for the government in formulating more adaptive protection and prevention policies that reflect on-the-ground realities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

International Labor Migration and Non-Procedural Migration

International labor migration is a structural phenomenon influenced by development disparities, wage differentials, and limited employment opportunities in countries of origin (Nur, 2020). For Indonesia, labor migration is viewed as a household economic strategy as well as a source of remittances. However, in practice, not all migration processes take place through official state mechanisms, giving rise to the phenomenon of non-procedural migration. Non-procedural migration refers to cross-border labor mobility that does not comply with administrative requirements and labor or immigration laws (Yuveniansus Manek et al., 2023). The literature indicates that non-procedural migration is not solely associated with organized crime, but also represents the outcome of rational individual decisions in which official procedures are perceived as slow, costly, and insufficiently responsive to urgent economic needs (Effendi & Triarda, 2024). Accordingly, non-procedural migration should be understood as a socio-economic phenomenon involving the interaction between workers' agency and the limited capacity of the state.

Independent Migration as a Strategy of Migrant Workers

Independent migration refers to a form of migration undertaken on individual initiative without going through placement companies or official government mechanisms. Several studies show that independent migration has developed strongly in border areas between Indonesia and Malaysia, supported by geographical proximity, cross-border social relations, and high demand for labor in the informal sector (Nur, 2020). The literature emphasizes that independent non-procedural migration is chosen because it offers a faster, more flexible, and relatively lower-cost

process compared to official channels (Firdaus et al., 2024). Perceptions of bureaucratic inertia, lengthy administrative procedures, and limited access to government services at the local level further reinforce migrant workers' tendency to manage their migration independently (Aulija et al., 2025). These findings indicate that migrant workers are not entirely passive actors, but rather actively determine migration strategies they perceive as most realistic given their circumstances.

The Role of Informal Networks in Non-Procedural Migration

The persistence of independent non-procedural migration cannot be separated from the role of informal networks involving brokers, relatives, former migrant workers, and local actors in border regions. These networks function as sources of information, facilitators of travel, and intermediaries between migrant workers and employers in destination countries (Firdaus et al., 2024). The literature shows that informal networks often substitute for the role of the state during the pre-departure phase and initial job placement (Effendi & Triarda, 2024). However, the absence of regulation and oversight results in employment relationships that tend to be unequal. Practices such as placement without written contracts, wage uncertainty, and workers' dependence on intermediaries are common characteristics of non-procedural migration (Fauziah et al., 2024).

Working Conditions and Protection of Non-Procedural Indonesian Migrant Workers

Most studies conclude that non-procedural Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) face more vulnerable working conditions than procedural migrant workers. Without official work documents, migrant workers are generally employed in informal sectors with limited oversight, such as plantations, construction, and domestic work (Nur, 2020; Fauziah et al., 2024). The consequences include wage uncertainty, long working hours, the absence of social security, and limited access to complaint mechanisms and legal protection (Yuvensianus Manek et al., 2023). Non-procedural status also weakens migrant workers' bargaining power and increases their fear of reporting rights violations due to the risk of immigration sanctions (Bimantoro et al., 2023). Thus, independent non-procedural migration has direct implications for migrant workers' vulnerability, both in terms of working conditions and the protection of their fundamental rights.

Migrant Worker Protection Policies

The Indonesian government has developed various policies to prevent illegal migration and protect migrant workers, including through the role of BP2MI. However, the literature indicates that policy implementation continues to face challenges, particularly related to limited service coverage, inadequate outreach in migrant-sending areas, and a predominantly reactive policy approach (Peny, 2025). Limited data on non-procedural PMI also complicates monitoring and protection efforts in destination countries and weakens bilateral coordination between Indonesia and Malaysia in migrant worker protection (Dohude, 2025). This condition underscores the need to strengthen official migration services that are more accessible, responsive, and aligned with the socio-economic realities of migrant workers, particularly in border regions.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical research design. The qualitative approach is chosen because this study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of independent migration modes undertaken by Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) in entering and working in Malaysia through non-procedural channels, including the driving factors, migration patterns, and implications for migrant worker protection. This approach enables the researcher to comprehensively describe social realities based on empirical data and relevant theoretical frameworks. The data used in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with relevant parties, such as former non-procedural Indonesian Migrant Workers, PMI family members, and stakeholders in migrant-sending areas or institutions responsible for migrant worker issues. Meanwhile, secondary data were collected through a literature review, including laws and regulations, books, academic journals, official government reports, and previous studies related to independent migration and non-procedural migrant workers. Data collection techniques included interviews, documentation, and literature review. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to allow the researcher to obtain in-depth information while remaining focused on the research questions. Documentation was used to collect supporting data in the form of policy reports, statistical data, and relevant official documents. The literature review was conducted to strengthen the theoretical analysis and to identify research gaps that form the basis of the study's novelty.

Data analysis was carried out using qualitative analysis techniques, which include data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The collected data were selected and classified based on themes relevant to the research questions and then analyzed interpretatively to identify patterns, relationships, and meanings related to the phenomenon of independent non-procedural migration. The results of this analysis were subsequently used to draw conclusions that address the research objectives. To ensure data validity, this study applied triangulation techniques, including both source triangulation and data triangulation. By comparing information obtained from different sources and methods, the findings are expected to be scientifically credible and accurately reflect actual conditions in the field.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Modes of Independent Migration of Indonesian Migrant Workers in Entering Malaysia through Non-Procedural Channels

The first issue addressed in this study concerns how Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) carry out independent migration modes in entering Malaysia without following official procedures, including the routes used and the role of informal networks that facilitate departure and job placement. Based on a review of various scholarly sources and previous studies, independent non-procedural migration does not occur randomly, but rather follows recurring patterns that have formed relatively established migration practices in several PMI-sending areas. One of the most frequently used modes in independent non-procedural migration is the utilization of unofficial border crossings, commonly referred to as “rat routes.” These routes are widely found in border areas between Indonesia and Malaysia, particularly in West Kalimantan and coastal regions with direct access to Malaysia. Nur (2020) explains that open geographical conditions, weak surveillance, and cross-border social ties make these unofficial routes the primary choice for PMI seeking to enter Malaysia without undergoing immigration inspection. In practice, PMI often cross in groups with the assistance of local actors who are familiar with border terrain.

In addition to land routes, illegal sea routes are also a dominant mode, especially from the Riau Islands toward Johor Bahru and other coastal areas of Malaysia. Firdaus et al. (2024) reveal that non-procedural PMI are often transported using small boats or speedboats at specific times, such as at night or during unstable weather conditions, to avoid law enforcement patrols. This mode indicates coordination between PMI and intermediaries who have access to maritime transportation and information regarding patrol patterns. Another commonly used mode in independent migration is the misuse of travel documents, particularly the use of visit passports or tourist visas for employment purposes. Under this scheme, PMI formally enter Malaysia through official channels but subsequently work without valid work permits. Yuvensianus Manek et al. (2023) note that this practice is often perceived as safer by PMI because it does not involve physical smuggling, although it still violates immigration and labor regulations. Independent migration through document misuse is generally facilitated by informal actors who assist with passport and travel arrangements.

The success of these independent non-procedural migration modes cannot be separated from the role of informal networks operating at both local and transnational levels. These networks typically consist of brokers, former PMI, relatives, or acquaintances who have previously worked in Malaysia. Effendi and Triarda (2024) emphasize that trust-based informal networks exert strong influence in migration processes, particularly in rural areas with limited access to official information. Information regarding costs, departure routes, and types of employment is often obtained through these networks. In practice, informal networks play a role not only in departure but also in job placement in Malaysia. PMI who enter through non-procedural channels are usually directed to work in informal sectors such as plantations, construction, and domestic work. Fauziah et al. (2024) show that such placements are often conducted without written employment contracts and without clarity regarding wages and working hours. These conditions place PMI in a weak bargaining position and make them highly dependent on employers or intermediaries.

Independent non-procedural migration is also influenced by PMI perceptions of official procedures as ineffective. Aulija et al. (2025) note that many PMI choose independent routes because official processes are perceived as slow, complicated, and incompatible with urgent economic needs. Bureaucratic delays, limited BP2MI services in sending areas, and insufficient assistance encourage PMI to seek alternative migration pathways outside state mechanisms. The impacts of independent non-procedural migration modes are evident in the high level of vulnerability experienced by PMI in destination countries. Without official work documents, PMI lack access to legal protection and social security. Dohude (2025) explains that non-procedural PMI are often reluctant to report rights violations due to fear of legal sanctions or deportation. This condition demonstrates that independent migration modes are not only related to entry methods but also directly affect PMI working conditions and safety.

Furthermore, the presence of unregulated informal networks creates opportunities for abuse, including links to transnational crime. Bimantoro et al. (2023) reveal that non-procedural PMI who operate outside state protection systems are more vulnerable to exploitation by criminal networks due to their weak legal and economic position. This finding indicates that independent non-procedural migration has broader implications for security and social order. Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that independent migration modes used by PMI to enter Malaysia through non-procedural channels involve various patterns, including the use of illegal routes, misuse of travel documents, and reliance on informal social networks. These modes have developed as responses to limitations in the official migration system and weak upstream protection. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of independent migration modes is a crucial initial step in formulating more effective and sustainable policies for PMI prevention and protection.

Factors Encouraging Indonesian Migrant Workers to Choose Independent Non-Procedural Migration

The second issue addressed in this study concerns the factors that encourage Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) to choose independent non-procedural migration to work in Malaysia. Based on literature review and analysis of previous studies, these driving factors do not operate independently but are interrelated and form a complex causal chain. These factors include socio-economic conditions in sending areas, limited access to official migration mechanisms, and PMI perceptions of bureaucratic delays and inefficiencies in overseas job placement processes. Socio-economic factors constitute the primary drivers underlying PMI decisions to pursue independent non-procedural migration. Limited employment opportunities in areas of origin, high unemployment rates, and low income levels encourage individuals to seek better livelihoods abroad. Nur (2020) explains that in border areas between Indonesia and Malaysia, migration to Malaysia has become a structural household economic strategy that operates across generations. In this context, independent migration is perceived as a rapid solution to meet family economic needs.

Beyond economic pressure, limited social capital and educational attainment also influence PMI migration choices. Many prospective PMI come from low educational backgrounds and have limited access to official migration information. Yuvensianus Manek et al. (2023) emphasize that such conditions result in limited understanding of legal and social risks associated with non-procedural migration. Consequently, decisions to migrate independently are often based on partial information obtained from local environments rather than official government sources. Limited access to official migration mechanisms is another significant factor encouraging PMI to choose non-procedural routes. Aulija et al. (2025) reveal that BP2MI services have not fully reached PMI-sending areas, particularly remote and border regions. Geographic distance, transportation costs, and inadequate outreach hinder PMI access to official services, reinforcing dependence on informal networks that offer faster and simpler migration processes. In addition to access constraints, official labor migration procedures are perceived as complex and time-consuming. Firdaus et al. (2024) note that lengthy administrative stages—ranging from training and medical examinations to document processing—are often incompatible with the urgent economic needs of prospective PMI. Under such conditions, independent non-procedural migration is viewed as a more realistic alternative despite its high risks.

Perceptions of bureaucratic inertia further strengthen PMI preference for independent non-procedural migration. Effendi and Triarda (2024) highlight bureaucratic delays in mitigating non-procedural migration, particularly among female PMI. Slow service delivery, weak inter-agency coordination, and limited local assistance foster distrust in the state's ability to protect migrant workers, prompting PMI to independently manage migration processes. Policy ineffectiveness at the implementation level also contributes to non-procedural migration. Peny (2025) shows that BP2MI policies addressing non-procedural PMI remain largely reactive rather than preventive. Law enforcement and repatriation efforts are not matched by systematic improvements in access to and quality of official migration services, limiting policy effectiveness in reducing independent migration.

At a broader level, independent non-procedural migration is also influenced by weak protection and surveillance in border areas. Fauziah et al. (2024) explain that surveillance gaps facilitate human trafficking and labor exploitation, yet for PMI these conditions are perceived as easier access to Malaysia. This reflects differing perceptions of migration risk between the state and migrant communities. PMI vulnerability is further exacerbated by potential involvement with transnational criminal networks. Bimantoro et al. (2023) note that PMI outside official systems are more susceptible to criminal exploitation due to their lack of legal protection and weak bargaining power. Although not all PMI experience such conditions, this risk constitutes a structural consequence of independent non-procedural migration. From a policy perspective, Dohude (2025) emphasizes that coordination challenges between Indonesian and Malaysian governments hinder effective protection of non-procedural PMI. When protection in

destination countries is perceived as similar for both official and unofficial migrants, PMI tend to choose faster and cheaper migration routes. In summary, PMI decisions to pursue independent non-procedural migration result from the interaction of socio-economic pressures, limited access to official mechanisms, and negative perceptions of labor migration bureaucracy. These interrelated factors create migration patterns that cannot be addressed solely through law enforcement. Therefore, preventive efforts must focus on structural improvements to migration systems, enhanced access to official services, and strengthened trust in the state's protective role.

Implications of Independent Non-Procedural Migration Modes for Working Conditions and Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers in Malaysia

The third issue addressed in this study highlights the implications of independent non-procedural migration modes for the working conditions and protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) in Malaysia. As discussed in the first and second issues, non-procedural migration affects not only entry routes and driving factors but also significantly impacts PMI safety, rights, and welfare. Based on literature review and previous studies, these implications emerge across multiple dimensions, including vulnerability to rights violations, uncertainty in working conditions, and challenges faced by the Indonesian government in monitoring and protecting migrant workers.

1) Vulnerability to Migrant Worker Rights Violations

Independent non-procedural migration directly increases the risk of rights violations against PMI in Malaysia. PMI working without official documents or formal work permits often lack access to legal protection, making them vulnerable to exploitation, wage abuse, and physical or psychological violence. Yuvensianus Manek et al. (2023) emphasize that non-procedural migrant workers occupy weak bargaining positions due to the absence of valid employment contracts and exclusion from government protection systems. As a result, they frequently experience poor working conditions, excessive working hours, and denial of basic rights such as health insurance and leave. Bimantoro et al. (2023) add that non-procedural PMI are also at risk of unintended involvement in criminal networks, including practices resembling human trafficking or other illegal activities. In such situations, migrant workers face difficulties reporting abuses due to fear of arrest, deportation, or retaliation from employers or intermediaries. This phenomenon illustrates the structural consequences of independent non-procedural migration for PMI human rights protection. Furthermore, Fauziah et al. (2024) find that PMI working in informal sectors such as plantations, construction, and domestic work frequently experience wage uncertainty and unclear working hours. The absence of official documentation prevents PMI from accessing dispute resolution institutions or complaint mechanisms, allowing rights violations to remain undetected and unresolved. This underscores how independent non-procedural migration exacerbates protection disparities between documented and undocumented migrant workers.

2) Unstable and Unregistered Working Conditions

Independent non-procedural migration also affects PMI working conditions in practical terms. Effendi and Triarda (2024) note that PMI entering through non-procedural routes typically work in poorly regulated informal sectors, lacking certainty regarding wages, contracts, or working hours. In some cases, employers fail to provide adequate accommodation or basic facilities, forcing workers to bear living costs independently. Such conditions adversely affect PMI physical and mental well-being and increase occupational health and safety risks. Firdaus et al. (2024) emphasize that working conditions of non-procedural PMI are heavily influenced by the role of informal intermediaries facilitating job placement. These intermediaries often prioritize employer needs over worker rights and safety, resulting in unilateral wage deductions, forced labor, and contractual uncertainty. Consequently, independent non-procedural migration significantly increases employment insecurity compared to procedural migration, which offers clearer protection mechanisms. Nur (2020) adds that in Indonesia–Malaysia border areas, non-procedural migration is often viewed as an adaptive livelihood strategy but negatively impacts job quality. Workers entering through such routes typically accept low-paying and physically demanding jobs due to limited alternatives and urgent economic needs. This creates a paradox in which migration provides employment opportunities abroad while simultaneously increasing risks to PMI rights and safety.

3) Government Challenges in Monitoring and Protecting PMI

Another implication of independent non-procedural migration relates to government monitoring and protection efforts. Aulija et al. (2025) emphasize that the Indonesian government, through BP2MI, faces significant challenges in monitoring non-procedural PMI due to their absence from official records. Limited data restrict protection initiatives, rights socialization, and legal assistance provision. These challenges are compounded by the geographic characteristics of PMI-sending areas, which are often remote or border regions with limited access to official services.

Dohude (2025) highlights that government policies addressing non-procedural PMI remain largely reactive, focusing on repatriation or enforcement against illegal intermediaries rather than preventive measures. Preventive approaches through official procedure socialization and service capacity enhancement remain insufficient, allowing independent non-procedural migration to persist. Strong informal networks further complicate government oversight. Peny (2025) notes that these networks play dual roles by facilitating migration while simultaneously increasing rights violation risks. Governments must compete with entrenched informal systems, necessitating more strategic approaches to build PMI trust in official procedures and improve monitoring effectiveness. Effendi and Triarda (2024) further emphasize that bureaucratic delays at the local level—such as slow document processing and limited support for female PMI—reinforce non-procedural migration incentives. Strengthening bureaucratic capacity, accelerating services, and expanding outreach are therefore essential to reducing independent non-procedural migration.

4) Social and Economic Impacts on PMI and Communities

Independent non-procedural migration also carries social and economic implications for PMI and their home communities. Nur (2020) notes that although non-procedural migration may rapidly increase household income, long-term economic risks rise when PMI experience rights violations, job loss, or fines and deportation in destination countries. Families left behind often face income uncertainty due to unstable working conditions abroad. Fauziah et al. (2024) add that non-procedural migration affects social patterns in sending communities. Dependence on informal routes and intermediaries may foster exploitative practices such as illegal fees or abuse of prospective PMI social status. This demonstrates that independent non-procedural migration impacts not only individual PMI but also broader social and economic community structures.

5) Protection and Risk Mitigation Efforts

Various studies emphasize the need for comprehensive protection strategies for non-procedural PMI. Yuvensianus Manek et al. (2023) recommend expanding access to legal services and strengthening complaint mechanisms for PMI in Malaysia, particularly those in informal sectors. Enhanced coordination between Indonesian and Malaysian authorities is necessary to ensure PMI rights are protected regardless of migration status. Firdaus et al. (2024) add that socialization of official procedures and strengthening BP2MI capacity in sending areas can reduce PMI interest in independent migration. Peny (2025) emphasizes that preventive approaches are more effective than enforcement alone, as they help prospective PMI understand migration risks and benefits of official pathways. Bimantoro et al. (2023) highlight the importance of addressing security concerns and potential involvement of PMI in illegal networks. Risk mitigation efforts must include protection from exploitation and empowerment initiatives enabling PMI to recognize migration risks. This aligns with Effendi and Triarda's (2024) findings on bureaucratic weaknesses requiring institutional strengthening to encourage official migration use.

Nur (2020) and Aulija et al. (2025) emphasize the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration between central and local governments, as well as between Indonesia and Malaysia, to create a safe and fair migration system. In this context, protecting non-procedural PMI is not solely a government responsibility but also requires the involvement of communities, non-governmental organizations, and social networks to support monitoring, education, and rights protection efforts. Based on the foregoing discussion, it can be concluded that the implications of independent non-procedural migration for the working conditions and protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) in Malaysia are complex and multidimensional. Non-procedural migration increases the risk of rights violations, creates employment uncertainty, and poses significant challenges for government monitoring and protection efforts. Structural factors such as socio-economic pressures, bureaucratic weaknesses, and strong informal networks reinforce these practices, necessitating comprehensive mitigation strategies. These strategies include strengthening bureaucratic capacity and accelerating official migration procedures, expanding outreach to prospective PMI regarding migration risks and benefits, ensuring legal protection and complaint mechanisms for PMI in Malaysia, enhancing cross-border collaboration, and promoting community-based assistance and social network engagement. Through comprehensive implementation of these strategies, non-procedural migration practices can be reduced while safeguarding PMI rights, safety, and welfare.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, several main conclusions can be drawn. First, independent non-procedural migration of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) to Malaysia is driven by a combination of internal and external factors. Internally, household economic pressures, limited social capital, and restricted access to information constitute the primary driving factors. Externally, bureaucratic weaknesses, officially perceived complex migration procedures, and the strong presence of informal networks facilitating departure further reinforce non-

procedural migration practices. Second, independent non-procedural migration poses significant risks to PMI working conditions and protection. Workers entering through non-procedural routes frequently face wage uncertainty, long working hours, and limited safety guarantees and legal protection. In addition, they are more vulnerable to rights violations, exploitation, and involvement in illegal practices conducted by informal networks. This indicates that non-procedural migration not only affects individual workers but also generates broader social and economic implications for families and communities in areas of origin. Third, the government faces serious challenges in monitoring and protecting non-procedural PMI. Limited data availability and weak inter-agency coordination hinder effective prevention and risk mitigation efforts. Moreover, reactive policy approaches and bureaucratic delays at the local level further strengthen PMI dependence on informal migration channels. Therefore, strengthening the official migration system, enhancing education for prospective PMI, improving legal protection, and promoting cross-border collaboration are essential measures to reduce non-procedural migration practices. Overall, independent non-procedural migration represents a multidimensional problem that requires a comprehensive approach involving government institutions, communities, and social networks supporting PMI, in order to ensure that the rights, safety, and welfare of migrant workers are adequately protected.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings, several recommendations are proposed:

1. Strengthening Bureaucracy and Official Migration Services

The government should accelerate and simplify official migration procedures, including faster document processing, capacity building of BP2MI in sending areas, and more responsive service delivery. These efforts are crucial to encourage prospective PMI to utilize official migration channels.

2. Enhancing Education and Outreach

Outreach regarding the risks of non-procedural migration and the benefits of official pathways should be intensified, particularly in border areas and remote regions. Education can be delivered through local media, community organizations, and educational institutions to ensure prospective PMI have adequate information before making migration decisions.

3. Legal Protection for Non-Procedural PMI

For PMI already working in Malaysia, accessible complaint mechanisms and legal protection frameworks are required. The Indonesian government should strengthen coordination with Malaysian authorities to ensure PMI rights are protected regardless of their migration status.

4. Cross-Border and Cross-Sectoral Collaboration

Monitoring and protection efforts should involve cooperation between the Indonesian and Malaysian governments, as well as non-governmental organizations. Such collaboration is essential to monitor PMI conditions, reduce exploitation risks, and enhance the effectiveness of migrant worker protection.

5. Community- and Social Network-Based Assistance

Utilizing local communities and social networks to assist prospective PMI can help them better understand their rights, risks, and official migration procedures. This form of assistance can also strengthen PMI awareness and reduce the temptation to use high-risk non-procedural migration routes.

With the integrated implementation of these recommendations, it is expected that independent non-procedural migration practices can be minimized, and the rights, safety, and welfare of Indonesian Migrant Workers can be better safeguarded.

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