

Empowering Indonesian Migrant Workers in Taiwan through Stress Management Training

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Abstract

The findings indicated a considerable improvement in respondents' knowledge regarding disaster mitigation. Before the test, the majority of respondents had adequate knowledge, with 32 individuals (84.22%) falling into this category, while 6 respondents (15.78%) had strong knowledge. The respondents' level of knowledge is evident in the questionnaire results. The majority of respondents lack knowledge regarding disaster mitigation steps, the negative impact of disasters on health, and the protection of vulnerable groups during disasters. However, after receiving education, all respondents demonstrated a high level of knowledge, with 38 individuals (100%) performing well. On the other hand, the post-test results indicate that 38 elderly individuals participated in the test. The average score obtained was 79, indicating a good level of knowledge among the elderly vulnerable group after receiving information on flood disaster mitigation. This demonstrates that the participants possess the ability to comprehend the offered content, and their degree of knowledge falls within the satisfactory group. This health education program aims to provide advantages to all communities in Lepo-lepo village, with a particular focus on vulnerable populations such as the elderly.

Keywords: Stress management; Indonesian migrant workers; Empowerment; coping mechanisms

Abstract

Pekerja Migran Indonesia (PMI) menghadapi berbagai masalah salah satunya masalah kesehatan mental. Jumlah IMW pada tahun 2022 meningkat signifikan dibandingkan tahun 2020 dan 2021 karena dibukanya akses penempatan di berbagai negara tujuan pasca pandemi COVID-19 (BP2MI, 2022). PMI di Taiwan meningkat 7% pada tahun 2020 dibandingkan pada dekade sebelumnya dan dilaporkan memiliki berbagai masalah kesehatan mental yang berujung pada hal negatif. Pada tahun 2021 dilaporkan bahwa tenaga kerja perempuan di Taiwan yang mengalami masalah kesehatan mental melakukan koping dengan menggunakan zat adiktif, perilaku berbahaya, dan mengalami masalah mental lebih serius seperti kecemasan, depresi, dan stress. Kegiatan pengabdian yang dilakukan oleh dosen FIK UM bertujuan guna memberikan pelatihan tentang pentingnya pengelolaan stres dan memberikan alternatif strategi koping yang positif. Target pelaksanaan pengabdian ini yaitu untuk meningkatkan pengetahuan terhadap pengelolaan stress yang diukur melalui pre-test dan post-test. Metode pengabdian yang digunakan adalah strategi perencanaan dan evaluasi program berdasarkan akar permasalahan. Kegiatan pengabdian diawali dengan diskusi dan FGD dengan mitra terkait

permasalahan yang dialami oleh PMI Indonesia di Taiwan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kegiatan pelatihan memberikan peningkatan pengetahuan peserta terkait manajemen stres, strategi koping, dan *romance scam* pada peserta yang ditandai dengan peningkatan skor rata-rata sebesar 11,25 atau meningkat sebesar 19,67%. Tidak hanya itu, serangkaian pelatihan juga dilengkapi dengan memberikan pilihan aktivitas fisik yang dapat membantu meningkatkan kesehatan mental dan fisik. Peningkatan nilai post-test pada akhir kegiatan mengindikasikan adanya peningkatan pengetahuan dalam pengelolaan stress. Kegiatan secara komprehensif diharapkan mampu dilaksanakan secara rutin dan menjadi wadah bagi PMI di Taiwan untuk berdiskusi secara terbuka terhadap berbagai permasalahan yang dihadapi.

Keywords: Manajemen stress; Pekerja migran Indonesia; Pemberdayaan; mekanisme koping

INTRODUCTION

Employment is one of the population indicators that influences the welfare of a nation. Migrant workers contribute to the economic growth of high-income countries. Migrant workers often become workers for dangerous, menial, and inferior jobs that national workers from developed countries are reluctant to do (Tsai, 2012). One of the government's roles is to ensure workers' health, safety, and protection (Indonesia, 2006; Sastrohadiwiryono and Syuhada, 2019).

Indonesian workers (TKI) or Indonesian Migrant Workers (IMW) who work abroad contribute in all aspects. The number of IMWs in 2022 increased significantly compared to 2020 and 2021 due to the opening of placement access in various destination countries after the COVID-19 pandemic (BP2MI, 2022). Data from the BP2MI or Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Agency for 2022 recorded an increase of up to 590% in the formal sector and 52% in the informal sector. Judging from data from IMW provinces, East Java contributed the highest figure at 26% of the total IMW.

Taiwan is a country that relies on migrant workers from Southeast Asia (Lee et al., 2022). In 2020, the number of migrant workers in Taiwan increased 7% compared to the previous decade (Ministry Of Labor Republic Of China (Taiwan), 2021). As of October 2022, 34% of immigrant workers in Taiwan were recorded as coming from Indonesia, which was second in number after Vietnam (35.5%). Meanwhile, 60% of migrant workers work in the manufacturing industry. These employment opportunities often have dangerous, low-skill requirements, and low wages, leading to higher psychosocial stress and increased risk of injury and illness among workers (Hargreaves et al., 2019). Specifically, the accident rate is 2.87 per thousand migrant workers, consisting of 48% from Vietnam, 22% from Indonesia, 13% from Thailand, and 16% from the Philippines (Ministry Of Labor Republic Of China (Taiwan), 2021).

Poor adaptation during acculturation is widely known to cause additional psychological stress among migrants. Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) groundbreaking work highlights that stress and coping mechanisms are most prominent when individuals encounter significant life changes or challenges. Immigration or migration is a prime example of such a major life event for migrants. Naturally, coping responses to the stresses brought on by cultural transitions are an expected and unavoidable part of the acculturation process for most immigrants, refugees, international students, sojourners, and even the children of immigrants. In this context, existing

research on acculturation has identified a range of stressors commonly experienced by migrants that necessitate coping strategies (Castro and Murray, 2010; Kuo, 2014).

Mental health in the world of work is still not a special concern in terms of intervention programs or policies. However, mental health problems have an impact on public health and population problems. Mental health needs to be a serious concern, especially for migrant workers throughout the world. This problem also affects IMW who have been going through a series of adjustment processes to the environment, culture, and work activities in a new country.

There was an increase in IMW complaints in 2022, with Taiwan becoming one of the countries with the highest number of complaints. Based on data for 2022, there is an increase in complaints of around 11% in the Asian region (Sastrohadiwiryono and Syuhada, 2019). Over the last three years (2020-2022), IMW wanting to be returned to Indonesia has had the most cases filed for various reasons. Apart from that, IMW in Taiwan often faces various problems caused by language barriers, differences in cultural factors, low levels of education, and lack of literacy in selecting information on social media (Astuti et al., 2022).

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE COMMUNITY, PROBLEMS AND TARGET SOLUTIONS

General description

Taiwan ranks third highest and always experiences an increasing trend in the number of IMWs every year. There will be 26% of migrant workers or around 53,459 people working in Taiwan in 2022. Taiwan is the country with the largest number of Indonesian Migrant Worker Recruitment Permits. SIP2MI or Indonesian Migrant Worker Recruitment Permits is a permit given by the head of the Agency to the Indonesian Migrant Worker Placement Company which is used to place prospective Indonesian Migrant Workers.

IMWs who experience mental health problems use various coping strategies. In 2021, it was reported that female workers in Taiwan who experienced mental health problems were coping by using addictive substances, and dangerous behavior, and experiencing more serious mental problems such as anxiety, depression, and stress (Pangaribuan et al., 2021a). Furthermore, migrant workers in Taiwan during the pandemic experienced work overload, economic difficulties, isolation, discrimination, and fear of infection which affected work opportunities and productivity (Lee et al., 2022).

Target Description

1. Target audiences is Indonesia Migrant Workers in Taiwan both men and women.
2. Total participants are 24 who indicate with mental health problems by the agency.

Problem

This community service has three problems that it wants to solve.

1. Migrant workers in Taiwan during the pandemic experienced work overload, depression, and fear.
2. Migrant workers in Taiwan had economic difficulties.
3. There is no training and mentoring program for IMW stress management problem.

Target solution

From the description of the problem above, there are solutions offered to bridge and minimize the problem through several training programs. The training program is specifically to train partners in dealing with IMW who experience symptoms or problems of stress at work. The

training is guided by psychologists. Training (Training of Trainers) is aimed at Partners so that in the future, Mitra will be able to continue the training program for migrant workers who need it.

METHOD

In implementing this training, the method used is the program planning and evaluation strategies based on the root causes of problems. The planning and evaluation strategy plans include:

1. Determining Problem Priority

Situation analysis was carried out using the SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat) method through in-depth interviews with partner representatives and IMW representatives. Apart from that, a literature study was carried out to see a general picture of the incident regarding the existing problem. The results of the SWOT analysis are described as follows:

Table 1. Analysis of partner situations and conditions

Strength a) Taiwan is the country with the largest number of Indonesian Migrant Worker Recruitment Permits issued b) Until October 2022, 34% of immigrant workers in Taiwan came from Indonesia	Weakness a) Reports of depression and work stress, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic in Taiwan b) There is no training and mentoring program for IMW stress management problems
Opportunity a) Partners as IMW placement and mentoring services have the potential to become trained personnel in helping IMW problems, especially work stress problems	Threat a) Can directly interfere with health and work productivity b) Indirectly it becomes a state problem

2. Target Partners

The partner for this service activity is a placement and guidance service for Indonesian migrant workers in Taipei, Taiwan. Meanwhile, the target of the activity is Indonesian migrant workers in Taipei.

3. Place and Time

Activities were carried out for one full day located in Taipei, Taiwan.

4. Implementation of Activities

Training activities are carried out by providing several materials through lectures and related practices delivered by experts. The material consists of stress management, romantic scams, and physical activity. The activity begins by providing a pre-test sheet to find out basic understanding regarding stress management. The activity was filled with reflection and games to dig deeper into IMW's problems. The activity closed with a post-test and the provision of an activity evaluation sheet.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Community service activities with the theme 'Empowering Indonesian Migrant Workers in Taiwan through Training on Stress Management and Coping Mechanism' go through several activity stages, starting with discussions and FGDs (Focus Group Discussion) with partners regarding the problems experienced by Indonesian Migrant Workers (IMW) in Taiwan. After carrying out the FGD process, problem priorities were determined so that three topics were raised in this service activity. The three topics include stress management and coping strategies, romance scams or fraud under the guise of romance, and fun activities to gain physical fitness. In several previous studies, there were findings that IMW, especially women, were vulnerable to problems of depression, anxiety, stress, violence, and sexual harassment due to low education, language understanding, and lack of literacy in the use of social media (Yang *et al.*, 2020; Pangaribuan *et al.*, 2021b; Astuti *et al.*, 2022). One of them is through dormitory problems, whether it is fraud under the guise of a dormitory or problems arising from marriage to a partner from Taiwan.

Training activities related to these three topics were carried out on June 11 2023 in Taipei, Taiwan. This activity was attended by 16 IMW, 6 partner representatives, and 2 agency representatives. Before entering the material session, participants are required to work on the pre-test questions that have been provided with a duration of 15 minutes and the distribution of questions, namely, seven questions related to stress management and coping strategies, eight questions related to fun activities to gain physical fitness, and five questions related to romance scam. After carrying out the pre-test, participants watched the video material on stress management and coping strategies presented by a psychologist and continued with a sharing and discussion session, namely question and answer between the participants and the presenters. The discussion session became a medium for IMW to share problems that had been hidden. IMW can tell stories openly and express problems without discrimination. This mindfulness practice can be a form of intervention that aims to improve the quality of psychological well-being that has so far been unable to be explained (Ni Made Ari Wilani *et al.*, 2020).

The next session continued with the delivery of a second material related to romance scams presented by a legal expert and continued with the delivery of physical activity material presented by a sports health expert. Next, a sharing and discussion session was held regarding the material. The enthusiasm of the participants was very visible in every sharing and discussion session. The participants were very active in asking questions and providing their personal experiences regarding these topics and quite a few asked for input from the presenters regarding the problems they faced. The lack of job training sessions and the lack of support from fellow IMWs and agencies worsen their mental condition (Hidayati *et al.*, 2023). Therefore, this training session was highly anticipated and will be a forum for sharing. After the material delivery session, the participants continued with a post-test session with a duration of 15 minutes.

Results were measured by administering pre and post-test instruments before and after the training was given. Of the 16 IMWs, the average pre and post-test scores are as follo

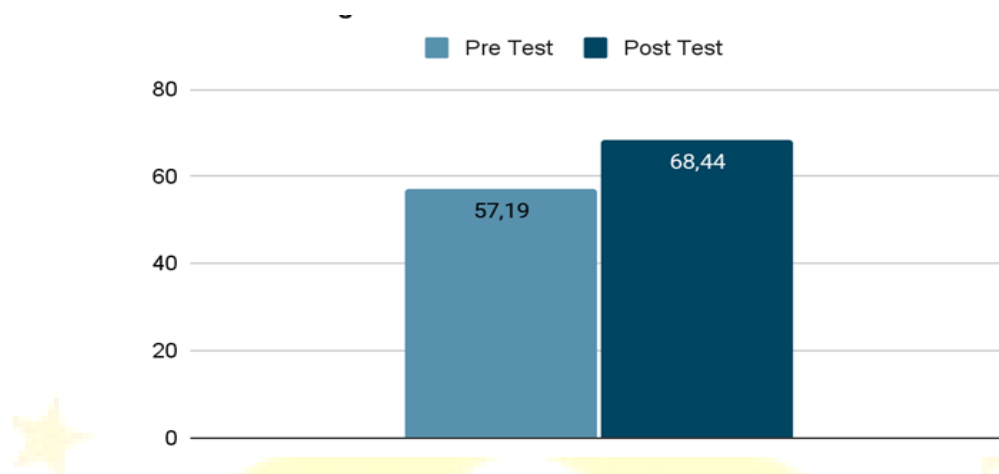


Figure. 1 Bar Chart Comparison of Average Results of Pre-test and Post-test Scores

The average score obtained in the pre-test was 57.19 and in the post-test was 68.44. This training activity increased participants' knowledge regarding stress management and coping strategies, romance scams, and physical activity among the participants, which was marked by an increase in the average score of 11.25 or an increase of 19.67%. In the pre-test, the highest score was 75, while in the post-test the highest score was 80. This training was one way to increase knowledge about stress management and other related material. This is in line with various similar trainings that can help reduce and manage stress for IMW (Astuti *et al.*, 2022; Hidayati *et al.*, 2023; Syakarofath, N.A., Nuro, F.R, M., & Karimun, 2023). Additionally, a series of trainings are also equipped with activity options that can help improve mental and physical health. Doing regular physical activity has been proven to be in line with mental health (Navarra *et al.*, 2023). Studies show that people who are active in physical activity have better mental health (Jacob *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, it is hoped that the series of topics provided will be able to balance and help increase self-confidence in a positive direction for IMW.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The training activities were welcomed by IMW and partners, agencies, and migrant worker associations in Taiwan. An increase in post-test scores at the end of the activity indicates an increase in knowledge of stress management. However, the short training time meant that the material could not be delivered comprehensively. It is hoped that comprehensive activities can be carried out regularly so that IMW can better understand the importance of stress management. Apart from that, it is hoped that similar activities will become a medium for IMW to be able to openly discuss the various problems they face.

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