

## **MORAL RESILIENCE EDUCATION FOR INDONESIAN MIGRANT WORKERS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Indonesian migrant workers face many moral pressures as they carry out their duties in their workplaces, such as getting salaries that are not as promised, discrimination, acts of violence from employers, trafficking, fraud, withholding passports or other important documents, harassment, working hours that violate work agreements, and so on. This moral distress can lead to physical, psychological and spiritual turmoil for workers, impacting the quality of their work, as well as having a wider impact on stakeholders. It can constitute severe suffering when they are inhibited from exercising their integrity. To be able to face and overcome these moral pressures, they must have strong moral resilience. They need to get support from various stakeholders, especially from educational institutions that function to provide moral education. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explain moral resilience education for Indonesian migrant workers. The research method used is a qualitative method by conducting a literature study. The result of this research is that Indonesian migrant workers must receive moral resilience education from educational institutions as a form of strengthening and protection to them.

**Keywords:** *Education, Migrant Workers, Moral Pressure, Moral Resilience*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Based on the Indonesian Migrant Worker Placement Data for July 2023 issued by the Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Agency or Badan Perlindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia (BP2MI), the number of worker placements increases every year. The July 2023 data shows the number of placements was 161,249, of which 63,081 men (down 36%) and 98,168 women (up 64% from the previous year). Of the 161,249 placements, when viewed from the level of education, the number of Indonesian migrant workers with elementary, junior high, high school / vocational school education is the largest number when compared to those with higher education, namely 156,674 (97%). This data is accompanied by data on complaints due to various problems faced by Indonesian migrant workers, including: unpaid salaries, acts of violence from employers, trafficking, fraudulent employment opportunities, placement fees exceeding the cost structure, work not in accordance with the employment agreement, withholding of passports or other documents, and others (BP2MI), 2023). When looking at the data above, it can be seen that

Indonesian migrant workers are dominated by workers with educational backgrounds below bachelor's degree and female gender. They are workers who are vulnerable to pressure or threats so they need support and protection.

Protection must be given to Indonesian migrant workers in terms of maintaining their moral resilience. When they are in another country, they must immediately adjust to a new environment with situations and conditions that are very different from their environment when they were in Indonesia. They encounter diverse habits, values and cultures. This adaptation process is already a challenge in itself. They may face moral challenges or moral distress when they encounter things that are different from their moral values or when they are hindered in practising their moral values.

Moral distress is the moral suffering that a person experiences when he knows what his moral responsibilities are in a bad situation, he evaluates various actions, understands which decisions are right according to his beliefs but he is hindered or prevented from doing the right thing. Such suffering leads to stress, which is when ethical challenges threaten one's integrity. When moral distress is acute and unresolved, the nervous system becomes disrupted and activates negative emotions, such as anger, frustration, and hopelessness, fatigue, loss of control, confusion, loss of empathy, a sense of helplessness, which can eventually lead to physical disorders (e.g. joint, muscle disorders, headaches, or changes in weight, digestion, others), behavioural disorders, and spiritual restlessness (Cynda Hylton Rushton, 2017).

Migrant workers often have difficulty maintaining their behaviour and adhering to their cultural values and religious principles when interacting with their social environment. Spiritually, migrant workers may experience spiritual emptiness due to lack of religious guidance so that when moral pressure arises, they will easily make the wrong decision. The length of time a person works in another country without strong support from various parties, will be able to shake the faith, moral values, and good habits he had before. Ignoring or neglecting the spiritual emptiness and the magnitude of moral pressure, can endanger and destabilise the migrant worker's soul, which will then slowly make him commit destructive acts (M. Syarif, 2022). Therefore, the development of moral resilience of migrant workers really needs support from stakeholders.

Moral distress is heightened for migrant workers when they are subjected to many abuses, especially those experienced by low-skilled and undocumented workers. They often face low wages, physical and verbal abuse, long working hours, poor working conditions, and confiscation

of passports and wages by their employers. Undocumented migrant workers are often subject to personal security threats, such as kidnapping and human trafficking. Another thing that migrant workers can experience is when people stigmatise migrant workers as criminals, disease carriers, threats to the local workforce in receiving countries, and seen as a threat to national security and social order (Dhanny Safitri and Ali Abdullah Wibisono, 2023).

The government has further improved protection for Indonesian migrant workers by issuing Regulation of the Minister of Manpower No. 4 of 2023 concerning Social Security for Indonesian Migrant Workers which is an improvement to Permenaker No. 18 of 2018. In the new Regulation of the Minister of Manpower in Chapter IV regarding the benefits of the employment social security program, the government guarantees new benefits in protecting Indonesian migrant workers holistically covering the period before, during, and after work, including: health services, including treatment due to physical violence and/or rape. compensation in the form of money for work accidents, compensation for partial anatomical disability, partial functional disability, and permanent total disability; compensation for death due to work accidents, rehabilitation costs in the form of purchasing assistive devices (orthese) and / or replacement devices (prothese); reimbursement of the cost of artificial teeth, hearing aids, and glasses as a result of work accidents assistance and vocational training costs, scholarships for education for children of Indonesian migrant workers, and others (Kementerian Ketenagakerjaan RI, 2023). These efforts of course still require support from various other parties, especially from educational institutions by providing moral education services that strengthen the moral resilience of workers.

Based on the description above, Indonesian migrant workers need support from various parties to develop their moral resilience so that they are able to deal with various pressures or moral stress in the world of work. In this case, what is meant by moral resilience is "an ability to recover from or adjust easily to adversity or change" (Webster Dictionary, website). Support is especially needed from educational institutions that function to provide moral resilience education. Therefore, this research focuses on discussing moral resilience education for Indonesian migrant workers.

## **METHOD**

The research method used is a qualitative method with a literature study approach. The author collected various data and information from various literatures published in the last six years in the form of books, scientific articles, regulations on employment, and other documents

related to Indonesian migrant workers, moral resilience, and moral pressure. Furthermore, the author analyses it using the Miles and Huberman analysis technique, which includes data collection, data processing, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Based on the problems and research objectives stated in the introduction, in this section the author discusses moral distress, moral resilience, and moral resilience education for Indonesian migrant workers.

### **Moral Distress**

In the development of mental health science, moral distress is increasingly recognized as the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the mental health of health workers. Workplace stress has contributed to decreased job satisfaction and intentions to leave their jobs. Moral distress was originally understood to occur when a person knows the right thing to do, but faces institutional or procedural or other constraints that prevent them from pursuing the right course of action. In the development of this understanding, moral distress has expanded transdisciplinarity. Further, mindfulness-based distress reduction techniques have evolved to reduce moral distress. Some views suggest teaching emotion management skills; and others suggest cultivating moral resilience, which is essential for fostering awareness and curiosity, as well as the ability to shift by generating multiple solutions and possibilities (Ria K. Nishikawara & Theresa D. Maynes, 2023).

Similar to the pressures faced by health workers during the Covid-19 pandemic, Indonesian migrant workers are particularly vulnerable to moral distress, which is the moral anguish that a person experiences when he knows what his moral responsibilities are in a situation, he assesses various actions, and understands which decisions are right according to his beliefs but he is inhibited or prevented from doing the right thing. Acute and unresolved moral distress can cause the nervous system to become disrupted and activate negative emotions, such as anger, frustration, despair, fatigue, loss of control, confusion, loss of empathy, a sense of helplessness, which can eventually lead to severe physical distress (e.g. joint and muscle disorders, headaches, or changes in weight, digestion, etc.), behavioural disturbances, and spiritual restlessness.

There are several internal factors that cause moral distress in Indonesian migrant workers, namely:

1. **Difficulty Adapting.** Socially, migrant workers often experience difficulties in maintaining, maintaining behaviour and adhering to the values of their culture of origin and religious principles when interacting with different social environments.
2. **Spiritual Emptiness.** Spiritually, migrant workers may experience spiritual emptiness due to lack of religious guidance, so that when moral pressure arises, they will easily make the wrong decision. Ignoring or neglecting the spiritual emptiness and moral pressure can disrupt and jeopardise the mental stability of migrant workers, which will slowly lead them to commit destructive acts.
3. **Weak Moral Support.** The length of time a person works in another country without strong support from various parties, will be able to shake the faith, moral values, and good habits he had before.

There are also several external causes of moral distress in Indonesian migrant workers, namely:

1. Lack of respect for human rights and rights as Indonesian migrant workers.
2. Lack of professional management of the placement of Indonesian migrant workers.
3. Government protection of Indonesian migrant workers is not yet optimal.
4. Involvement of various parties in overcoming moral pressure on Indonesian migrant workers, such as educational institutions, health institutions (especially psychotherapy), and families is not yet optimal.

### **Moral Resilience**

Migrant workers need to be strengthened with moral resilience. The term commonly used today to describe resilience is resilience. Resilience is a general concept that has been applied in a variety of fields. Resilience generally refers to the ability to recover from or healthily adapt to challenges, stress, adversity, or trauma. With his resilience, he is able to control himself against negative thought patterns and behaviours, develop self-awareness and insight, deepen moral sensitivity, see ethical challenges wisely and principled, have the willingness to take courageous action, be able to find meaning in the midst of difficulties, and be able to maintain personal integrity and team integrity (Rushton, 2017). Resilience is the ability to adjust, recover, or bounce back easily after experiencing difficult or negative events. Resilience is not only an innate trait, but also something that can be developed. Therefore, various efforts can be made to support and

encourage the development of moral resilience. According to Earvolino-Ramirez (2007) as cited by Nishikawara & Maynes, there are six characteristics of moral resilience, namely: a) the ability to bounce back in the face of adversity and reactivate in life in a positive way after facing challenges (reintegration); b) having goals and achievements in life (self-determination); c) meaningful relationships that provide opportunities to communicate (social support); d) adaptability to change (flexibility); e) the ability to make light of difficulties and moderate the tendency of emotional reactions (sense of humour), and d) the ability to feel about oneself and belief in one's own abilities (self-esteem) (Nishikawara & Maynes, 2023). A person who faces severe moral distress, if he/she receives support for the development of moral resilience, will be able to cope well with the moral distress.

Thus, according to Rushton, moral resilience is a person's ability to maintain, restore, or strengthen their integrity in response to moral complexity, confusion, difficulty, or setbacks. Moral resilience is a skill in dealing with moral distress. They can recognize their ultimate intentions, moral sense, moral responsibility, and effectively navigate ethically complex, ambiguous, or conflicting situations. With all that is happening and being faced, one can remain more positively disposed, even if they feel pressured (Rushton, 2017). Such moral resilience is what migrant workers need to have which they cannot strive for alone. She must be open to receiving support from other parties. Likewise, stakeholders must be sensitive to the importance of strengthening the moral resilience of migrant workers.

### **Moral Resilience Education for Indonesian Migrant Workers**

One of the tasks of educational institutions today is to conduct moral education with the aim of developing students' moral resilience. This education is provided to overcome moral disorders without losing identity as moral actors. Moral education must be understood in three developments, namely the capacity to take care of oneself, the capacity to function as a citizen, and the capacity to live a fulfilling life (Katharina Bauer & Julia Hermann, 2022). This education is urgently needed by migrant workers.

In the context of education and teaching, the term resilience focuses on identifying specific risk and protective factors that enable or inhibit resilience. The notion of resilience not only includes recovery from stress or pressure to previous levels of health, but also includes continued growth due to healthy responses to stressful situations. For some learners, resilience also involves the ability to recognize, endure and mediate the tension between inclusion and exclusion. A

contextual approach to resilience is helpful in considering the interconnectedness of the individual and their environment in managing and maintaining resilience. Moral resilience questions pre-existing and accepted conventions; beliefs that define a person's (or group's) understanding of what is right and wrong, appropriate and inappropriate. Moral resilience is realised when there is a sense of commitment and willingness to act in accordance with those beliefs. A key component of moral resilience is a sense of community and solidarity that can lead one to assume responsibility. One way to understand and identify moral resilience is to illustrate its opposite, that is, to consider scenarios that juxtapose complex moral issues with weak personal ethics and then analyse how leadership handles the situation. The primary goal of teaching resilience should be to support people in developing their resilience skills. Educators should help learners to develop resilience so that they are able to cope with the challenges and changes of contemporary society (Lea Baratz, 2017).

Moral resilience in the teaching process means that values absorbed in the course of life are part of the learning process. Developing moral values will create self-confidence and the ability to overcome failure. Moral resilience is a strong foundation for the acceptance of a set of social values or norms, positive values that serve to regulate, educate and help learners become good people. Moral resilience can be expressed overtly or covertly through various activities undertaken. The development of moral resilience will create intelligent minds, and a quality society. The individuals who make up this society feel confident in their worldview. Educating to strengthen moral resilience will prevent feelings of inferiority. Education will empower individual values and enable them to have interpersonal discussions about important issues and feel safe when they create cognitive dissonance (Lea Baratz, 2017).

Moral resilience is developing and strengthening systems that enable learners to sustain the reality of life's difficulties. That is, moral resilience provides a way to cope with situations characterised by dissonance between what actually happens in reality, either on an individual or on a broader social level, and the values believed. Teachers must be role models, meaning that teachers are instrumental in the moral development of learners. Thus, the role of the teacher is to teach learners to overcome moral dilemmas and educate them to have the perception that when there are difficulties, it does not mean that everything is doomed. Moral resilience means facing situations in education where one chooses not to give up or take shortcuts in issues related to moral principles and values. It is important to educate learners so that they can acquire a set of

values that are based on social beliefs and awareness (Baratz, 2017). In the context of migrant workers' moral resilience education, it is important to recognize that such education must build collaborative partnerships.

Partnership is understood as an effort of empowerment, involvement, collaboration, dialog, and responsibility from many parties to achieve common goals in overcoming the moral challenges of Indonesian migrant workers. Partnerships bring together educational institutions at all levels and types of education, built interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary as a thought process, exchange of ideas, and research-based so that it is open to new findings about the world of Indonesian migrant workers. Partnerships should involve risk management to mitigate all risks that may occur during the planning and implementation of moral resilience education for Indonesian migrant workers.

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Coping with moral distress requires knowledge, experience, risk-taking, courage and ethical problem-solving skills. In this way, one can develop their moral resilience. Therefore, educational institutions have a huge role and opportunity in contributing to strengthening the moral resilience of migrant workers through the tridharma program of higher education, namely education/teaching, research, and community service. In the field of education/teaching, universities can provide access to migrant workers to participate in formal and non-formal education through distance education programs mediated by a learning management system which of course must be adjusted to government regulations; educational institutions can also open access for Indonesian migrant workers to participate in seminars and public lectures that can increase their insight and knowledge; and they can also be given the opportunity to follow education through the recognition of prior learning. In the field of research, institutions that handle research can conduct research related to the world of Indonesian migrant workers so that

the results of the research can be used as a strong basis for conducting moral resilience education for Indonesian migrant workers. Finally, in the field of community service, universities can provide moral guidance for Indonesian migrant workers in various disciplines.

## CONCLUSION

Indonesian migrant workers often face moral distress when they are in the midst of diverse values and habits, both negative and positive. When someone is unable to adapt while maintaining their moral identity, they will experience severe moral distress. Therefore, migrant workers must have moral resilience that is continuously strengthened through moral resilience education for Indonesian migrant workers. With this education, migrant workers can carry out their work based on moral resilience.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to thank Universitas Kristen Indonesia for facilitating this research. The author is also grateful to NGO Sharing and Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI), Malaysia for facilitating the author so that this scientific work can be presented in an international conference that has been held at UPSI Malaysia on December 11, 2023 and publish this article.

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