

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**ECONOMIC OUTCOMES,  
ASPIRATIONS AND HUMAN  
CAPITAL BUILDING OF  
ROHINGYA REFUGEES IN  
MALAYSIA**

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
**Doctor of Philosophy**  
**(Business Management)**

**Faculty of Business Management**

**September 2023**

## ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the economic outcomes of Rohingya refugees, with a specific emphasis on identifying the factors that contribute to their income and employment in Malaysia. Additionally, the study explores the aspirations and resettlement plans of Rohingya refugees and aims to identify the strategies they employ to develop their human capital, ultimately facilitating their successful resettlement. The data for this study was collected from Rohingya refugees, who constitute the largest refugee population in Malaysia. To gather information, a quantitative survey was conducted, involving 200 respondents residing in the Klang Valley areas. Additionally, qualitative interviews were conducted with 10 Rohingya refugees currently residing in Malaysia. Furthermore, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were carried out with 6 respondents who had been resettled in third countries. Binary logistic regression was employed to examine the employment status of Rohingya refugees, while multiple regression analysis was used to analyse their income levels. Thematic analysis was utilised to explore the aspirations, resettlement plans, and strategies employed by Rohingya refugees to develop their human capital. The findings reveal that Rohingya refugees with strong connections to the Malaysian community are more likely to secure employment, and networks within the Rohingya community help them share coping mechanisms and find employers offering higher incomes. Proficiency in the Malay language is also identified as crucial for achieving higher income levels. Thematic analysis indicates that education is the top priority for Rohingya refugees in terms of their livelihood aspirations, followed by the pursuit of citizenship in a country. As a community, most Rohingya refugees aspire to establish educated communities, and reuniting with their separated families is a primary family aspiration. In terms of long-term aspirations, the majority of Rohingya refugees express a desire to resettle in a third country. In terms of building their human capital, attending training programs offered by employers or NGOs is the most common strategy, followed by enrolling in refugee schools or schools operated by NGOs. In conclusion, this study recommends a dual approach that considers Malaysia's commitment to hosting refugees temporarily while also addressing the need for a long-term solution that involves facilitating their return home or resettlement in a third country.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the name of Allah SWT, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful. Alhamdulillah, all praises to Allah SWT for His blessings and guidance in completing this thesis. I express my gratitude to Allah for the opportunities, challenges, and strength provided to me throughout the writing process. Thank You, Allah, for everything.

I extend my deepest appreciation to my main supervisor, Professor Dr Tan Peck Leong, for his invaluable guidance, understanding, and patience. His positive encouragement and unwavering support have played a crucial role in completing this thesis. Words cannot adequately express my gratitude and appreciation. Thank you for never giving up on me.

I would also like to thank Associate Professor Dr Keshminder Jit Singh for his constructive feedback, assistance, and guidance, particularly in the area of qualitative research methods and analysis. It has been a privilege and honour to have both of you as my supervisors.

I extend sincere thanks to all my dear friends who have directly and indirectly supported and stood by me. I am grateful to Safwan, Fatin, Adidi, and others whom I may have unintentionally omitted, for their help and support. Thank you for always being there to listen, provide ideas, and assist me.

I am deeply grateful to my loving parents, siblings, and extended family for their encouragement and unwavering support. Thank you for your understanding and blessings throughout my PhD journey.

My utmost gratitude goes to my beloved husband, Mohamad Taufiq bin Mohamad, who has always loved, believed in, and supported me unconditionally. Your sacrifices have been immense in helping me complete this thesis. I would also like to express my appreciation to my beautiful daughter, who has been by my side and become my closest companion during the thesis writing process.

Finally, I express my gratitude to all the participants and the Rohingya interpreter who collaborated with me in this study. Without their involvement, this research would not have been possible. I thank them wholeheartedly. May this study prove beneficial and valuable to those who read this thesis.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Preamble

The first chapter of this research begins with an introduction, providing an overview of the context in which the study is situated. It sets the stage by highlighting the ongoing issue of refugees in Malaysia. The chapter then moves on to present the problem statement, which serves as the foundation for the research. This section aims to clearly articulate the specific problem or issue that the study seeks to address. The research objectives are then presented, specifying the goals and aims of the research. These objectives provide a roadmap for the study and guide the research process. Subsequently, the research questions are formulated, outlining the specific inquiries that the study seeks to answer. These questions serve as guiding points for the data collection and analysis. The chapter also addresses the research gaps, identifying the areas within the existing literature where further investigation is needed. This highlights the original contribution of the study and justifies its significance. Following the significance of the study, the chapter delves into the scope of the study, outlining the boundaries and limitations within which the research will be conducted. This helps to establish the focus and parameters of the study. Next, the chapter provides definitions of key terms used throughout the research. This ensures that readers have a clear understanding of the terminology and concepts employed in the study. Finally, the chapter concludes with a concise synopsis, summarizing the key points discussed and providing a brief overview of the subsequent chapters.

### 1.2 Background of The Study

The number of people displaced from their homes due to violence or persecution has been steadily increasing worldwide in recent years. Consequently, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has identified war, ethnic conflicts, and religious violence as the primary reasons for refugees fleeing their countries. These factors render refugees unable to return home or fearful of doing so, particularly for reasons related to their safety. The number of people forced to flee their