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MIGRANT WORKERS IN THE SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE TOWARDS ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT USING ECONOMETRIC MODELLING

Azyyati binti Anuar¹, Nur Fakhzan binti Marwan², Sirinya Siriyanun,³ John S.F. Smith⁴

Universiti Teknologi MARA Kedah^{1, 2}

Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University^{3, 4}

azyyati@uitm.edu.my¹

INTRODUCTION

The Thai government has prioritized the development of border areas connecting with neighboring countries in the ASEAN region. Songkhla Province has been designated as one such area. This means that Sadao, Hat Yai, and other cities in Songkhla Province have the potential to be economically important places. Songkhla's border crossings with Malaysia are particularly important as they are the only border crossings in Thailand with cross-border railroad access. Because of this, the Thai government has designated a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) as well as Malaysian government is also planning the development of Malaysia's first Special Border Economic Zone (SBEZ), labelled the Kota Perdana SBEZ. Since Thailand and Malaysia have relatively similar economies and levels of development, the conditions in all three of these locations namely Sadao, Bukit Kayu Hitam and Padang Besar will likely be comparable. Therefore, the lessons from one may be applied to the others.

PURPOSE/AIM & BACKGROUND

The study will focus on the migrant workers on the SEZ development towards sustainability which include economic and environmental impacts. Hence, research objectives of this study are:

- To investigate problems of migrant workers in the Special Economic Zone.
- To investigate the impact of migrants on economic and environment elements
- To produce guidelines for solving migrant workers problems in the Special Economic Zone.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Migrant Labor

"Alien" in Thai law refers to an individual who does not hold Thai nationality. The Alien Labor Act of 1978 states that aliens may only work in Thailand, whether by force or knowledge and for compensation or without wages, with the permission of the Director-General of the Department of Labor or an officer entrusted by the Director-General.

Economic Impact

Many scholars have discussed the importance of economic impact in the following ways. Wanthanee Bumiphatrakhom, Somyot Awakiet, and Thapthim Wongprayun (1995, 11-2) emphasize the importance of analyzing economic impact at every step of the production process, from the acquisition of raw materials to the creation and distribution of products. They divide economic impacts into two categories that consist of impacts at the micro-economic and macro-economic level.

Environmental impact

Environmental impact analysis aims to produce recommendations for policies and measures that can be used to reduce or prevent environmental impacts in order to minimize damage. Therefore, the process of impact assessment and assessment of the environment helps in the formulation of prevention and mitigation programs, as well as impact monitoring programs.

Special Economic Zone (SEZ)

Thailand introduced the policy of SEZ development in 2015, as an integral part of its expansive economic plan to promote trade and investment opportunities in border areas – connecting each zone with the respective bordering country in terms of trade, economy, and investment. Closeness to border areas enables businesses to benefit from low-cost, low-skilled cross-border migrant workers, as well as take advantage of the proximity to natural resources. In addition, investors and businesses can take advantage of the existing supply chain and new transport infrastructure to gain easy access to a growing market in Asia.

METHODOLOGY

The quantitative approach using secondary data will be conducted of this study. This phase will employ econometric modelling to analyze the impacts of migrants in the SEZ towards:

Economic Impact

Depending on the data availability, the proposed model of economic impact that apply Solow Growth Model is as follows:

$$GDP_t = f(CAPITAL, LOCAL LABOUR, IMMIGRATION_t, UNEMPLOYMENT_t) \quad (1)$$

Environmental Impact

Depending on the data availability, the proposed model environmental impact is as follows:

$$CO_{2t} = f(GDP_t, GDP^2_t, IMMIGRATION_t, RENEWABLE ENERGY_t, GOVPOLICY_t) \quad (1)$$

FINDINGS/RESULTS

The expected findings of this study, will identify the problems among migrant workers in the SEZ and perhaps more important that this study will provide a conclusive result about the migrant workers and sustainability impact in the SEZ. Finally, to produce guidelines for solving migrant workers problems in the SEZ.

CONCLUSIONS

This research builds on the notion that evidence using economic modelling to analyse the data. The researchers hope the findings of this study provides strong support for the theoretical expectations outlined above, assuming that the migrant workers contributes a huge environmental and economic impact towards SEZ.

Keywords: migrants workers, environmental impact, economic impact, Special Economic Zone, econometric modelling

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