

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**THE ECONOMIC PROFILING,  
WORK PERFORMANCE AND  
ECONOMIC LEAKAGE OF  
ROHINGYA REFUGEES AND  
INDONESIAN MIGRANT WORKERS  
IN KLANG VALLEY, MALAYSIA**

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**PhD**

**August 2021**

## **AUTHOR’S DECLARATION**

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the results of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any degree or qualification.

I, hereby, acknowledge that I have been supplied with the Academic Rules and Regulations for Postgraduate, Universiti Teknologi MARA, regulating the conduct of my study and research.

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Economic Leakage of Rohingya Refugees and  
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## ABSTRACT

As of 2019, Malaysia has about 1.87 million lower-skilled workers. The number of migrant workers may double or triple the official number. The number of foreign workers has created three main problems: over-dependence on migrant workers, demanding migrant workers, and substantial economic leakage due to outward remittances. At the same time, there are about 180,000 refugees in Malaysia, especially the Rohingya from Myanmar. Both low-skilled workers and refugees will hamper Malaysia from becoming a developed country. Therefore, appropriate policies are needed to address the problems of over-dependence, demands, and economical drainage caused by the influx of lower-skilled migrant workers and refugees' permanent stay in Malaysia. One obvious solution is to replace demanding lower-skilled migrant workers with refugee workers. Therefore, it is imperative to empirically determine whether Malaysia can replace a portion of the lower-skilled migrant workers that Malaysia's economy depends on with a group of people whom Malaysia cannot dispense. The data set consists of quantitative data using 180 self-administered questionnaires from employed Rohingya refugees and Indonesian lower-skilled migrant workers and qualitative data using individual and cross-case analysis from 6 employers across the business sector. For this purpose, this study uses data triangulation to examine the two approaches. The analysis of the economic profiling reveals that Rohingyas refugees actively participate in the informal economy and working. Although Indonesian have better education, surprisingly, some Rohingya refugees have higher education qualifications against the common belief that refugees are illiterate. Many Rohingya respondents arrived with a nuclear family, signifying that the livelihood needs and return plans are different from other economic migrants. The findings also show that economic reason is the dominant push factor for Indonesian migrant workers looks for their futures outside their homes. Concerning psychological factors contributing to work performance, this study found that Rohingya workers' resilience attributes strongly cause individual work performance. Results also show that self-efficacy attributes are the main contributor to Indonesian migrant's work performance. Triangulated evidence indicates diverse opinions, with most employers optimistic that the government should replace lower-skilled migrant workers with refugee workers. Finally, this research also confirmed that Indonesian lower-skilled migrant workers remit money larger than Rohingya refugees due to differences in family structure and remittance motives. In the short run, UNHCR and the Malaysian government should provide some legal work status to Rohingya refugees to reduce the reliance on migrant workers. However, all stakeholders must work together to repatriate all refugees back to their home country or third countries in the long run.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ALHAMDULILLAH, thanks to ALLAH S.W.T, the Greatest, for giving me the opportunity to embark on my PhD, watching over my family, and giving me the courage for completing this long and challenging journey successfully.

My gratitude and thanks go to my main supervisor Assoc Prof Dr Tan Peck Leong for his constant suggestions, thoughtful feedback, endless encouragement, and for understanding my hiccups in this journey. To Dr Keshminder Jit Singh, thanks for the constructive comments and assistances especially on the qualitative research method and analysis. Both of you are extraordinary supervisor who have led me to become a better researcher.

My appreciation goes to the Ministry of Education, Malaysia, and Universiti Malaysia Kelantan for providing the opportunity, supporting me financially and allowing me to take study leave to pursue my PhD study in UiTM, Malaysia.

I wish to thank to all the 360 respondents, especially the 7 employers for their valuable insights about the employability of the Rohingya refugees and Indonesian lower skilled migrant workers into the Malaysian labour market narrative. Without their commitment, and information shared, this study would not come to end. Also special thanks to my UMK and UiTM colleagues and friends for helping me with this research.

My warmest thanks and appreciation to my loving siblings, family in law and other family members for their continuous prayers, support, and encouragement.

Foremost, I believe that no words could express my deepest appreciations to my loving Umi, Aisiah Shaari, mother-in-law, Fatimah Yusof, my everlasting loving wife, Najjia Liyana Imtiaz, and my beautiful daughter, Aminah Naura (daddy love you so much), for your unconditional loves, compassion and understanding to endure the hardship with me.

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to the loving memory of my very dear late Abah, Ghazali Mohd Noor for the beautiful moments, endless love, and determination to educate me.

This masterpiece is dedicated to all of you. Alhamdulillah's.

*“Nun, Demi pena dan apa yang mereka tuliskan” (Al-Qalam, 68:1)*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>CONFIRMATION BY PANEL OF EXAMINERS</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>AUTHOR'S DECLARATION</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>XI</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>xiv</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Preamble	1
1.2 Introduction	1
1.3 International Migration Scenario in Malaysia	2
1.4 The Economic and Socio Impacts from Over Dependence of Lower Skilled Migrant Workers in Malaysia	8
1.5 Justifications for Indonesian Migrant to represent lower Skilled Migrant Workers	12
1.6 Problem Statement	14
1.7 Research Objectives	18
1.8 Research Questions	19
1.9 Significance of Research	20
1.9.1 To Body of Knowledge	20
1.9.2 To Host Country Government	21
1.9.3 To Employers	22
1.9.4 To Refugees	22
1.9.5 To UNHCR Agency	23
1.10 Scope of Study	23
1.11 Definition of Terms	24