

Towards Enhancing the Capabilities of Indonesian Migrant Workers in Taiwan through the Development of Soft Skills and Preparation for Self-Reliance

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ABSTRACT

Introduction - Indonesian migrant workers in Taiwan play a crucial role in the labor market but often encounter challenges related to skill deficiencies and dependence on their employers. Addressing these issues through the development of soft skills and preparation for self-reliance. States benefit economically from the remittances sent by Indonesian migrant workers, but these workers often face vulnerability, especially when their contracts expire, and they return to their home countries.

Purpose - This study aims to explore the enhancement of Indonesian migrant workers' capabilities by focusing on the development of soft skills and fostering self-reliance. It seeks to understand how targeted training programs can bridge skill gaps and empower workers.

Methodology - A mixed-methods approach was employed, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection. Surveys were distributed to a sample of Indonesian migrant workers to assess their current skill levels and training needs.

Findings - The study found that Indonesian migrant workers possess varying levels of soft skills, with significant room for improvement in areas such as communication, problem-solving, and adaptability. Training programs tailored to these needs were shown to enhance workers' job performance, confidence, and readiness for independent living.

Implications - Integrating digital marketing into the enhancement of soft skills and self-sufficiency training for Indonesian migrant workers in Taiwan offers a substantial chance to empower them and promote their economic progress. Proficiency in digital marketing can augment one's capacity to communicate proficiently, devise innovative solutions to challenges, and adjust to the ever-changing digital environment.

Keywords: Indonesia, soft skills, self-reliance, improvement.

INTRODUCTION

The process of globalization has left a significant effect on the unrestricted movement of transnational capital across national borders (Bowling & Sheptycki, 2017). The emergence of many pathways, resulting from the rapid process of globalization, has facilitated unregulated human movement across international borders. The advent of the free-market age has also led to the proliferation of budget airlines, which has had a significant impact on patterns of migration. Migrant labor continues to provide significant benefits to globalization and thriving capitalist enterprises. The presence of migrant workers has made a substantial contribution to the growth of host countries worldwide, including the UK, Italy, Malaysia, and Singapore. Meanwhile, nations of origin for migrants have taken satisfaction in collecting remittances from migrant workers, viewing them as a positive contribution to the

national economy (Altonji & Card, 2018; Borjas, 2018). Therefore, migrant workers are an inevitable outcome of globalization, while their presence has brought about intricate consequences. Nevertheless, numerous individuals and the global economy have gained economic advantages from their existence (Friedberg & Hunt, 2018).

Indonesian migrant workers form a vital part of Taiwan's labor market, contributing significantly to various sectors such as domestic work, manufacturing, and construction (Dinkelaker, 2024; Komarudin et al., 2023). Despite their crucial role, these workers often face numerous challenges, including language barriers, cultural differences, and a lack of essential soft skills, which hinder their ability to perform effectively and achieve personal growth. Due to their significant contributions, both the country and the family have

acknowledged their efforts. However, they are subjected to numerous forms of recurring mistreatment throughout the recruitment process, their employment, and when they are sent back to their home country (Gillard, 2019).

Soft skills, including communication, problem-solving, adaptability, and teamwork, are increasingly recognized as essential competencies that enhance job performance and facilitate smoother social integration (Kumar et al., 2022). These skills not only improve workers' day-to-day interactions and productivity but also empower them to navigate the complexities of their work environments more confidently and independently. Consequently, the development of these skills is crucial for fostering a more capable and self-reliant workforce (Tripathy, 2020).

An Indonesian migrant worker-focused digital marketing program in Taiwan can greatly improve their interpersonal skills and equip them for independence, providing numerous advantages. Through the process of acquiring knowledge in digital marketing, these individuals can develop crucial competencies including proficient communication, adept problem-solving, innovative thinking, and flexibility (Poláková et al., 2023). The curriculum can instruct individuals on how to utilize social media platforms effectively, generate captivating content, and comprehend analytics, all of which are highly valuable proficiencies in the current digital economy. This information enables individuals to pursue additional sources of income, such as freelancing or launching online enterprises, thus fostering financial autonomy (Easton-Calabria & Omata, 2018). Moreover, these skills can be applied in other industries, enhancing their marketability and adaptability in one's professional journey. As individuals gain expertise in digital marketing, they can also assist in promoting and supporting community activities, so making a good contribution to both their host and home countries. In essence, a digital marketing program provides Indonesian migrant workers with contemporary and valuable skills, while also instilling a feeling of empowerment and assurance, thereby facilitating long-term self-sufficiency and individual development (Schislyaeva & Saychenko, 2022).

This study aims to explore the potential benefits of enhancing the soft skills of Indonesian migrant workers in Taiwan and preparing them for self-reliance. By assessing current skill levels and identifying key areas for improvement, the research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the specific needs and challenges faced by these workers. Furthermore, it intends to propose practical solutions and training programs tailored to these needs, ultimately contributing to the betterment of the workers' lives and the overall efficiency of the labor market in Taiwan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The enhancement of migrant workers' capabilities

through the development of soft skills and preparation for self-reliance is a multifaceted issue that has garnered significant attention in recent years. This literature review synthesizes existing research on the subject, focusing on Indonesian migrant workers in Taiwan, and explores the impact of soft skills training and self-reliance initiatives on their professional and personal lives (Yuniarto, 2019).

Soft skills are increasingly recognized as critical for workplace success and personal development (Dai & Hwang, 2019). According to (Reissová et al., 2020), soft skills such as communication, problem-solving, adaptability, and teamwork are essential for effective job performance and career advancement. These skills complement technical abilities and enhance an individual's capability to navigate complex work environments. For migrant workers, who often face linguistic and cultural barriers, soft skills are particularly vital in facilitating better workplace integration and interaction with colleagues and employers (Caron et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2020).

Soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and adaptability, are essential in the modern workforce. For Indonesian migrant workers, developing these skills is crucial not only for improving their job performance but also for facilitating better integration into Taiwanese society. Research conducted by (Fong & Shibuya, 2020; Ullah & Alkaff, 2018) demonstrated that remittances from migrant workers have emerged as a significant driver of development, particularly in Indonesia.

Indonesian migrant workers in Taiwan encounter various challenges that impede their professional growth and self-reliance. Research by (Huang and Chen, 2020) highlights issues such as language barriers, cultural differences, and a lack of access to training resources. These challenges often result in limited job mobility and increased dependency on employers. Furthermore, the lack of soft skills exacerbates these problems, making it difficult for workers to assert their rights, seek better job opportunities, or engage in self-improvement activities (Chiang, 2018). Several studies have demonstrated the positive impact of soft skills training on migrant workers' capabilities. For instance, a study by (Khyareh, 2019) found that soft skills training significantly improves job performance and satisfaction among workers. In the context of migrant workers, enhancing soft skills can lead to better communication with employers, improved problem-solving abilities, and greater adaptability to different work environments. This, in turn, can result in increased job stability and opportunities for career advancement (Gibb, 2014).

Preparation for self-reliance is another critical aspect of empowering Indonesian migrant workers. Self-reliance refers to the ability to independently manage one's personal and financial affairs, as well as to plan. For

migrant workers, self-reliance can be achieved through financial literacy, entrepreneurship training, and access to social support networks. Studies have shown that migrant workers who are financially literate are better equipped to manage their earnings, save for the future, and invest in income-generating activities. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2020), financial literacy programs targeting migrant workers can lead to improved financial stability and reduce the risk of exploitation.

Moreover, entrepreneurship training can provide migrant workers with the skills and knowledge needed to start and sustain their own businesses, either in Taiwan or upon their return to Indonesia. As emphasized by Gindling and Newhouse (2014), entrepreneurship can serve as a viable pathway to economic self-sufficiency, especially for those who may face limited employment opportunities in their home country. (Auer, 2018).

Based to the 2021 World Bank data, approximately nine million Indonesian migrant workers (PMI) are currently residing overseas, employing both official and unofficial methods. Nevertheless, the quantity of PMIs is not consistently elevated. The global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a temporary halt to all human mobility, which therefore affects the movement of PMI figures internationally. Projections suggest a significant rise in the number of PMIs in 2021, with estimates ranging from 40 to 60 percent. This is believed to be attributed to the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, which have limited employment prospects within the country. In August 2020, the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) documented a surge of 2.67 million individuals without employment because of the COVID-19 epidemic, leading to a cumulative count of 9.77 million unemployed individuals in the Indonesian labour force. One potential solution for individuals facing unemployment is to pursue employment opportunities as migrant labourers in foreign countries.

METHOD

This study employed qualitative research methods to examine a range of literature and secondary sources, including scholarly works, reports from international bodies, and news coverage. According to (Maksum, 2021), employing a clearly defined theory to evaluate a case generally enhances the validity of the outcomes. The process of data analysis establishes a connection between theoretical concepts and pertinent up-to-date information as well as past reports. The current study utilized content analysis to investigate available data pertaining to Indonesian post-migrant workforce (Blanchard et al., 2024). This approach allows for the transformation of both textual and statistical information into a coherent and intellectually sound narrative, whether in an analytical or critical framework (Krippendorff, 2018). Content assessment approaches are frequently utilized in themes pertaining to policy

research. In addition, data are organized by choosing pertinent elements and then presenting them in the form of tables, matrices, charts, or models, due to the adaptable nature of qualitative analysis.

Table 1. General description of respondents

Gender	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Man	38	64
Women	22	36

Age	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
21-30 years old	7	12
31-40 years old	30	50
41 years and over	23	38

Qualitative research commonly employs methodologies such as direct quotes, statements/stories, or excerpts, focus groups, field notes, or important information (Eldh et al., 2020). Table 1 indicates that the study predominantly consisted of male respondents, accounting for 64% of the total with 38 participants. Female respondents constituted 36% of the sample, with 22 participants. Table 1 shows the age range 31-40 years 50% as many as 30 respondents, age 41 years and over 38% as many as 23 respondents, and the age range 21-30 years 12% as many as 7 respondents. Table 1 indicates that most respondents in this survey were between the age range of 31-40 years.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Remittances from Indonesian migrant workers significantly enhance the financial stability of their families. These funds are often used for essential needs such as food, housing, education, and healthcare. Studies have shown that remittances improve the living standards of recipient households, allowing for better educational opportunities and health outcomes (Ratha, 2013). Additionally, remittances can help households invest in small businesses and other income-generating activities, contributing to economic diversification and resilience.

Migrant workers in Taiwan often wish to return to Indonesia for several key reasons. One of the primary motivations is the desire to reunite with their families, having spent years separated from loved ones while working abroad. Additionally, many workers return with the intention of investing their savings in starting a business or purchasing property, aiming to secure a stable financial future in their homeland. The prospect of contributing to their local communities and living in a familiar cultural and social environment also plays a significant role. Moreover, some workers may return due to the expiration of their contracts, a desire to retire, or the challenges faced in the host country, such as workplace exploitation or difficulties adjusting to the

local culture. These factors combined make the decision to return home a significant and often deeply personal choice for many Indonesian migrant workers in Taiwan. Figure 1 explains several cases that happened to

migrant workers working abroad.

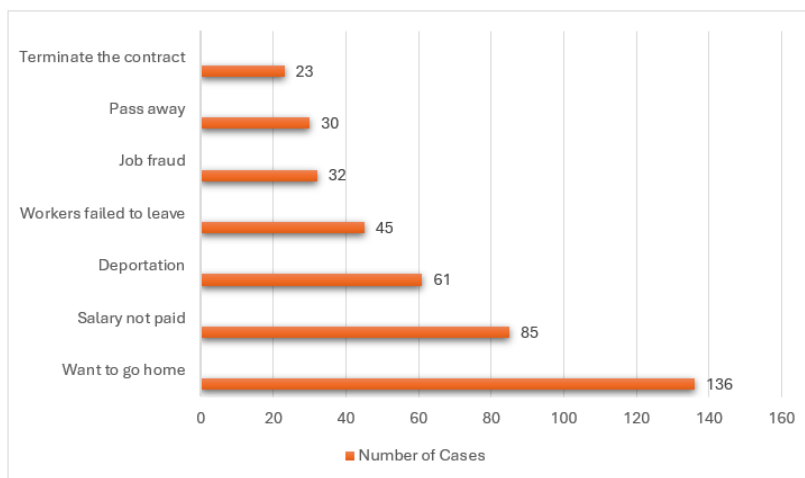


Figure 1. Most Migrant Worker Complaints based on Cases (Semester I 2024) (Sources: Sources: BP2MI <https://bp2mi.go.id/statistik-detail/>, accessed 08/21/2024).

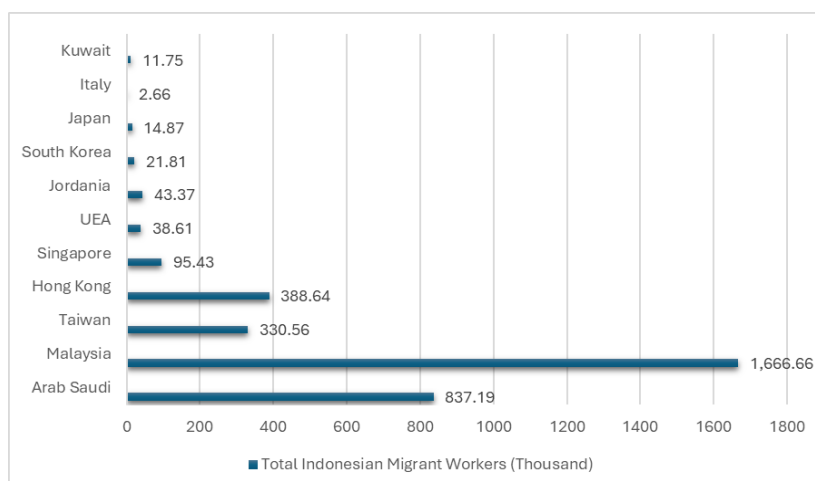


Figure 2. Number of Indonesian migrant workers abroad (Sources: BP2MI <https://bp2mi.go.id/statistik-detail/>, accessed 05/31/2024)

According to the World Bank's Migration and Development Brief 38 report, the flow of officially registered remittances to low and middle-income countries is projected to increase by only 1.4 percent to reach US\$656 billion by the end of 2023. The reason for this is the decline in economic activity in the countries from which remittances originate, which is reducing job opportunities and income for migrant workers. In its Migration and Development Brief 38 report (June 2023), the World Bank highlighted that remittance inflows have gained significance for governments and households during a period of sluggish economic growth following the Covid-19 epidemic and a decline in foreign direct investment. This is particularly true in low- and middle-income countries that have a significant amount of foreign debt. Sri Andayani, the Director of the Asian and African Non-Governmental Placement Agency for the

Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers (BP2MI), stated that remittance receipts in Indonesia declined during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020-2021, coinciding with social constraints. Nevertheless, the decrease in acceptance was not overly substantial. In 2019, the amount of money received through remittances in Indonesia was 11.4 billion US dollars. In 2020, the overall amount of money received as remittances decreased to 9.4 billion US dollars. In the subsequent year, the revenue once again declined to 9.1 billion US dollars. In relation to 2022, remittance revenues in Indonesia have surged to US\$9.7 billion, aligning with the efforts to repatriate Indonesian migrant workers who are recuperating from the effects of the Covid-19 outbreak. The total count of Indonesian migrant labourers sent overseas in 2022 is documented at 200,761 individuals.

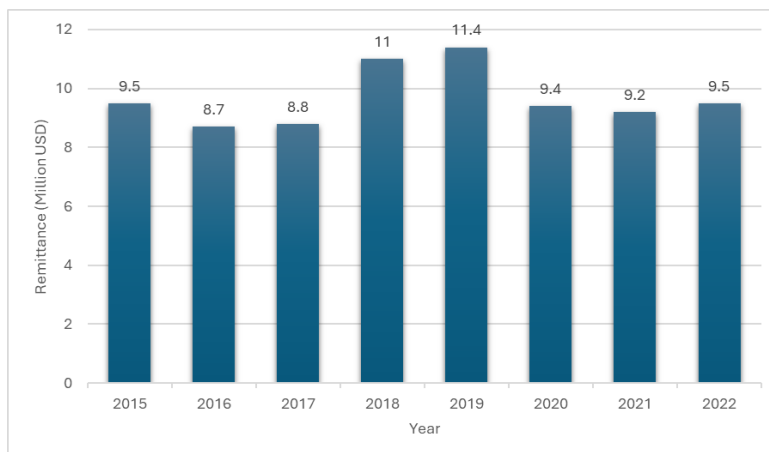


Figure 3. The value of remittances for Indonesian migrant workers (Sources: Bank of Indonesia, and World Bank)
 World Bank data updated available at <https://data.worldbank.org/country/indonesia> (accessed 05/31/2024).

Remittances from Indonesian migrant workers have played a crucial role in both the economy and household welfare from 2015 to 2022 that shown in Figure 3. The substantial financial contribution of migrant workers, amounting to billions of dollars annually, plays a crucial role in supporting their families and bolstering the Indonesian economy. Despite facing issues related to delivery costs and worker protection, ongoing attempts are being made to maximize the advantages of remittances through the implementation of suitable legislation and technical advancements. This guarantees that remittances continue to be a vital asset for Indonesia.

Post-migrant workers have challenges stemming from their financial insecurity. Due to their inability to support their families, their social standing declines and they may encounter psychological problems including dissatisfaction and despair, which can prompt them to migrate again. Indonesian post-migrant workers are currently facing a significant problem in financial management. The presence of brokers and recruiting agencies throughout and after the recruitment process in host nations resulted in financial hardships for Indonesian migrant workers, leading them to be trapped in debt bondage.

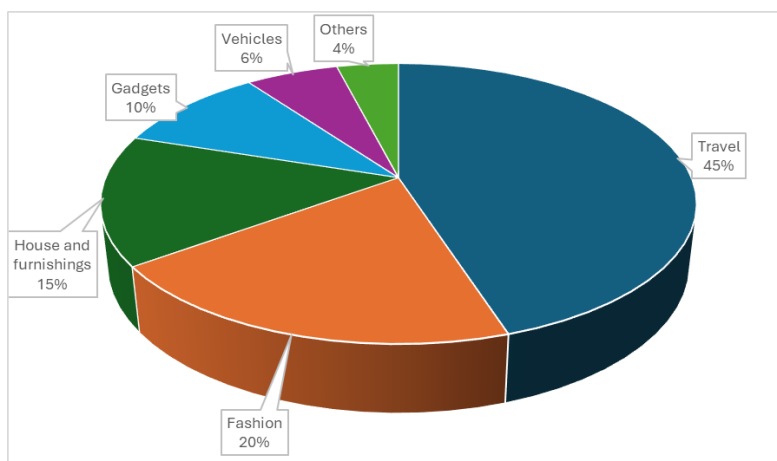


Figure 4. Consumption behavior of Indonesian migrant workers while working in Taiwan.

The absence of proper financial planning is a significant element that contributes to the failure of post-migrant workers to maintain their financial capacities. Their consumptive conduct hinders their ability to priorities spending on income. Although individuals possess financial literacy, they tend to opt for obtaining an immediate loan to obtain a temporary object like a motorbike or car. Based on the results of a questionnaire to 60 respondents, Figure 4 illustrates that a significant portion of the income earned by Indonesian migrant workers in Taiwan was allocated to

leisure activities, with a particular emphasis on travel expenses (45%). Furthermore, a substantial sum was allocated towards improving one's way of life, primarily in fashion (20%), with the remainder being utilized for constructing a residence and furnishing it (15%), purchasing gadgets (10%), acquiring a vehicle (car or motorcycle) (6%), and fulfilling other miscellaneous requirements (4%). This lavish way of living displays a lack of proficiency in managing finances, primarily attributed to insufficient education.

The development of soft skills and preparation for self-reliance are crucial for enhancing the capabilities of Indonesian migrant workers in Taiwan. These initiatives not only improve job performance and satisfaction but also empower workers to achieve greater independence and security. By investing in comprehensive training programs and support systems, stakeholders can significantly enhance the well-being and prospects of migrant workers, fostering a more skilled and self-sufficient workforce.

Indonesian migrant workers in Taiwan need to prepare for independence after completing their contract with strategic steps that include financial management, improving skills, and planning. While working in Taiwan, they should allocate a portion of their income towards savings and investments, which they can utilize as business capital or for emergency needs upon their return to Indonesia. They should also take part in training and courses to improve relevant technical and non-technical skills, such as languages, financial management, and other work skills that can increase job opportunities in the country. Apart from that, careful planning regarding long-term plans such as opening a small business, continuing education, or purchasing productive assets is very necessary. Building networks and maintaining communication with migrant worker communities and support organizations can also aid in getting the information and support needed. By making these preparations, migrant workers can be better prepared to face life after their employment contract ends and build sustainable economic independence.

Digital marketing is an important skill that can help Indonesian migrant workers develop soft skills and independence after completing their work contracts in Taiwan. Migrant workers can take advantage of online platforms to promote their small businesses or products they develop, expand their business networks, and increase sales by mastering digital marketing. Knowledge of digital marketing strategies, such as the use of social media, SEO (search engine optimization), email marketing, and data analysis, allows them to reach a wider audience at a relatively low cost. Apart from that, this skill also trains creative thinking, analysis, and effective communication skills—important elements in soft skills. Online resources such as digital marketing courses, webinars, and professional communities can provide strong tools for migrant workers to transition from workers to successful independent entrepreneurs. Thus, mastering digital marketing not only helps prepare for a more stable and independent future but also opens new opportunities in the digital era.

Digital marketing encompasses various online strategies used by businesses to promote their products or services through digital channels such as social media, email, and search engines. According to (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick 2019), digital marketing has become an

essential tool for businesses of all sizes due to its ability to reach a broad audience at a relatively low cost. For former migrant workers, mastering digital marketing can open doors to new business ventures, enabling them to leverage their unique experiences and networks.

Digital marketing presents a promising opportunity for these returnees to start their own businesses, offering flexibility and the potential for growth. By using digital platforms, they can tap into local and international markets, selling products or services without the need for significant upfront investment. This approach allows them to use the skills they've acquired, such as language proficiency, cultural understanding, and technical know-how, to build successful enterprises in Indonesia.

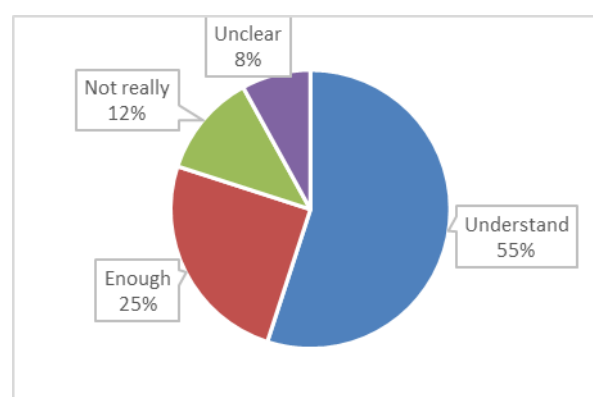


Figure 5. Pre-test understanding of digital marketing.

A pre-test understanding of digital marketing involves assessing an individual's baseline knowledge and skills related to various aspects of digital marketing before they undergo any formal training or education in the field. This assessment helps in identifying their current level of proficiency with key digital marketing concepts such as search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing, content creation, email marketing, and data analytics.

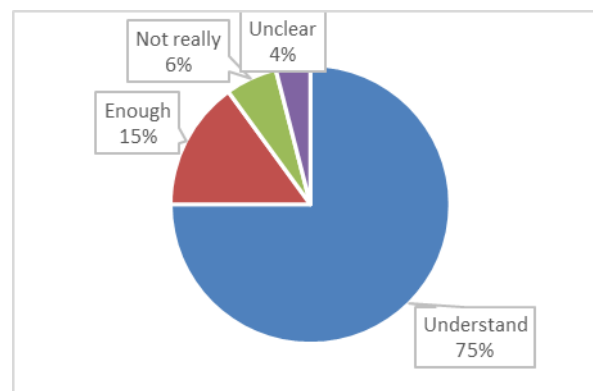


Figure 6. Post-test understanding of digital marketing.

After the post-test, the level of people's understanding

of digital marketing as an additional soft skill and increasing independence after completing a work contract in Taiwan could increase to 90% (understand and enough) or 54 people said they understood and were quite familiar with new media literacy). It may also test their familiarity with digital marketing tools and platforms such, social media, and content management systems. The pre-test understanding is crucial for tailoring the training programme to address specific gaps in knowledge, ensuring that the educational content is relevant and effective in enhancing the individual's digital marketing capabilities. Furthermore, it allows for the measurement of progress and training effectiveness by comparing pre-test and post-test results, ultimately contributing to a more targeted and impactful learning experience.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, incorporating digital marketing into the development of soft skills and preparation for self-reliance among Indonesian migrant workers in Taiwan presents a significant opportunity for their empowerment and economic advancement. Digital marketing skills can enhance their ability to communicate effectively, solve problems creatively, and adapt to the evolving digital landscape. By learning how to leverage social media, content creation, and online advertising, migrant workers can explore new income-generating activities, such as freelancing or starting small online businesses. This not only fosters financial independence but also equips them with valuable competencies that are transferable across various industries. Ultimately, integrating digital marketing education into their training programs can lead to a more capable, confident, and self-reliant workforce, capable of contributing positively to both their host and home countries' economies. Additionally, the familiarity with digital tools gained during their time in Taiwan makes digital marketing an accessible and appealing option for these workers. It provides them with a means to achieve financial independence and contribute to the local economy, all while staying connected with global markets. This combination of personal ambition, technological familiarity, and entrepreneurial spirit drives many migrant workers to return home and explore opportunities in digital marketing.

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