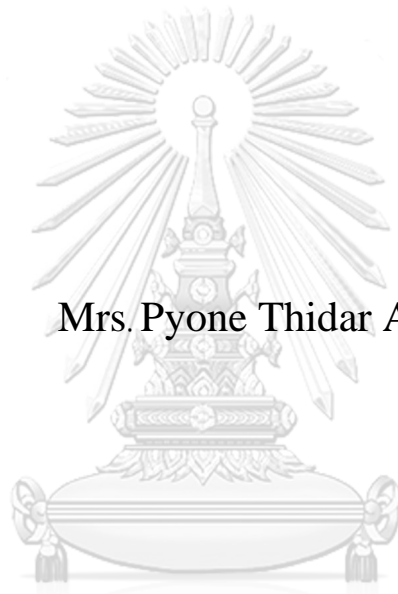


DECISION ON LATER LIFE MIGRATION OF MYANMAR
MIGRANT WORKERS IN RANONG PROVINCE,
THAILAND



Mrs. Pyone Thidar Aung

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

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for the Degree of Master of Arts in Population Policy and Human
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Field of Study of Population Policy and Human Development
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Over the past five decades, international migration has grown worldwide (IOM, 2022). At the same time, global human life expectancy has been increasing on average because of better health care and improved medical care. Becoming older while being a migrant creates more challenges and vulnerabilities in everyday life. This study examines factors impacting their later life migration or settlement through Myanmar migrant workers in Ranong Province, Thailand. The empirical evidence is gathered from the survey using structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The result of the binary logistic regression study indicated that living conditions, receiving working skills in Thailand, political and economic unrest in the origin country, and personal aspiration for migration greatly influence the decision of the settlement in later life of Myanmar migrant workers in Ranong, Thailand. Inaccessibility of document registration for older migrant workers led them to face many difficulties and vulnerabilities in many aspects of their life, including their children education. This effect not only impacts the older-age migrant workers but also the future of the younger generation. Myanmar's current political unrest makes older-aged Myanmar workers are less likely to return to Myanmar. Taking the fact that the border control between Thailand and Myanmar is challenging, skills development could be prioritized by both governments to promote the better-off productivity and well-being of people of both countries.

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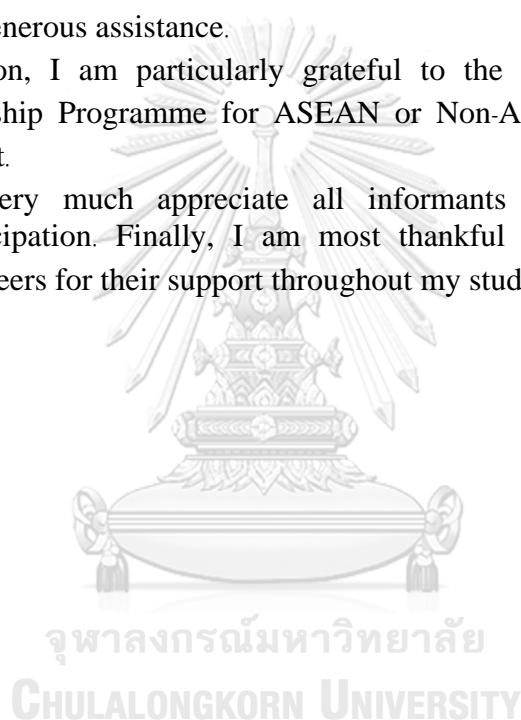


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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Background and significance of problem

Globally, the estimated number of migrations has increased in the past five decades (IOM 2022). The migration had risen to 272 million in 2019 from 81.5 million in 1970 (IOM 2019). At the same time, improving health and medical care leads to the increased life expectancy of human beings around the world. The global life expectancy had increased to 72 years in 2020 from 52 years in 1960 (TheWorldBankGroup 2022). In 2020, the number of people aged 65 years and over was about 727 million, or 9.3 percent of the global population. There is a projection that the proportion of the ageing population will be over 1.5 billion by the year 2050 (Division 2020). Regarding older migrants, there were 34.3 million or 12.2 percent of older migrants in the international migrant stock at mid-year 2020 (Division 2020). From 1990 to 2020, the global aging migrant proportion remained stable at around 12 (GlobalMigrationDataPortal and picture 2022).

Later life conditions and the settlement of migrants are extremely crucial. There are several choices for older-aged migrant reintegration to home country or remaining at the host country. Deciding to return to the homeland (later life settlement) of migration workers, especially for those far from their homeland for many decades plus the situation of becoming ageing and being vulnerable is very challenging for them in almost every aspect. The decision to return or not to return to the homeland is associated with many several factors such as political stability, long length of stay, and legal status in both origin and host countries, including their individual and family's socioeconomic status, culture, aspiration, capabilities, etc.

This study will analyze the influential factors on the decision of migrant workers' later life settlement. When the early entered migrant cohort group are getting

older, their settlement decision could be a new wave between Thailand and Myanmar migration. Their life management and a decision on settlement in their later life could shed and support some light on the situation regarding to returning and reintegration at the national, regional, and possibly global level. Even though both the Thai and Myanmar governments have tried to protect migrants and control migration, there are still lacking the solid policy of returning and reintegration service for migrant workers especially for low-skilled workers. Moreover, the study and information about returning and reintegration of migrant workers (semi/low-skilled workers) are scantily found in some ASEAN countries. Reintegration program in some ASEAN sending countries still remains limited (Wickramasekara 2019).

To contribute to a limited case studies in ASEAN, this study explores the case of Myanmar workers in Thailand. Myanmar - Thailand migration was ranked 17 out of the top 20 destination countries for international migration (IOM 2019), later life settlement of older Myanmar migrants in Thailand will represent and indicate a part of older-aged migrant situation in ASEAN regions. The Myanmar migrants, who entered around the year 1990s and if their age were 20-30 years or (more or less) of that time, right now their age has turned to 50-60 years old, which means they are at the beginning of aging status. Their life situation seems like a turning point and conducting the research and findings could benefit both countries as well as ASEAN regions.

Migration between Myanmar and Thailand has existed for many hundred years. However, Myanmar's migration to Thailand became significant last three decades (Chantavanich and Vungsiriphisal 2012). Most migrants entered Thailand by crossing borders. There are five crossing borders between Thailand and Myanmar: 1) Mae Sot-Myawaddy, 2) Mae Sai- Tachileik, 3) Ranong-Kawthaung, 4) Phu Nam Rom-Htee Khee, and 5) Sing Khorn-Three Pagodas. The main reason for migrants to come and work in Thailand is the wage differentiation (Chalamwong 2012). Thailand's economic growth and labor shortage become the work opportunity for migrants from

semi-skilled and low-skilled neighboring countries (Promphakping, Promphakping et al. 2019). In 2022, there were 2,131,751 documented migrant workers in Thailand and Myanmar migrants is the largest group among migrant groups (ILO 2022). In 1992 unskilled laborers in Thailand got registered for the first time (Chantavanich and Vungsiriphisal 2012). Nine years later, in 2003, the Thailand and Myanmar bilateral agreement imposed that migrant must return to their origin country every four years and take a three-year break (ILO 2020a). However, in actual there is no a clear system of return have defined. Some entered Thailand in 1992 or early before 1992, at the age of 20 or 25 years old and now their age turned to 50 or 55 years. Migrants aged over 55 years are not allowed to apply for work permits according to the announcement of Ministry of Interior, Thailand (TheCabinetSecretariatofThailand 2017). Those aged 55 years old and above encounter a stressful and uncertain future because their families are still working, and their children are still studying in Thailand while they will be forced to leave Thailand. It seems like their right to family unity is being threatened. Both governments have not clearly mention or preparation for returning and reintegration policy for Myanmar migrant workers (semi/low-skilled workers).

1.2 Research Objectives

The overall research objective is to explore the factors that influence later life migration decisions through Myanmar migrant workers in Ranong, who have stayed and worked in Thailand for more than ten years. The specific objective is to pinpoint the legal status, life, family, and employment conditions of Myanmar older-aged migrant workers, including their preparation and readiness for a later life settlement or migration. Moreover, the study will find new trends in demographic issues for policy recommendations in order to improve migrants' lives.

1.3 Research questions

1) What is the current condition of Myanmar migrant workers aged between 45 to 60 years old and who have been in Thailand for more than ten years?

2) What will be the major factors in making decisions on later life migration (or) settlement of those older-aged migrant workers?

3) To find out the potential trends of the demographic issue among migrant workers for policy recommendation.

1.4 Definitions of terms

Migrant worker - A person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national (IOM, 2022)

Older-aged migrant worker - A migrant worker who is the age between 45 and 60 years.

Migration - According to IOM, the movement of persons away from their place of usual residence, either across an international border or within a State.

Return migration - According to ILO, the return of migrant workers from a destination country back to the country of origin

Right to Family unity - According to UN, a family's right to live together and as a fundamental unit of a society, to receive respect, protection, assistance and support

Return international migrant workers - According to ILO, all current residents of the country who were previously international migrant workers in another country or countries.

1.5 Scope of Study

Myanmar migrant workers who have stayed in Thailand for more than two or three decades are getting older. Their ages are getting near 55 years, which means by age 55, migrant workers are not allowed to apply for work permits in Thailand according to Thai laws, which means they are not allowed to stay either. Their situation is a dilemma. It was a motivation for this research. The targeted group of this

study is Myanmar migrant workers aged between 45 and 60 years who have lived and worked in Thailand for more than ten years. Age 40 is the milestone, and the perfect time to evaluate and plan for long-run health because by this age, the human body increases the risk of many health conditions such as blood pressure, blood sugar, and body weight (Stokes, T. 2012). Studying the life conditions and well-being of migrant workers aged 45 and 60 helped figure out the later life migration decision as close to the actual conditions.

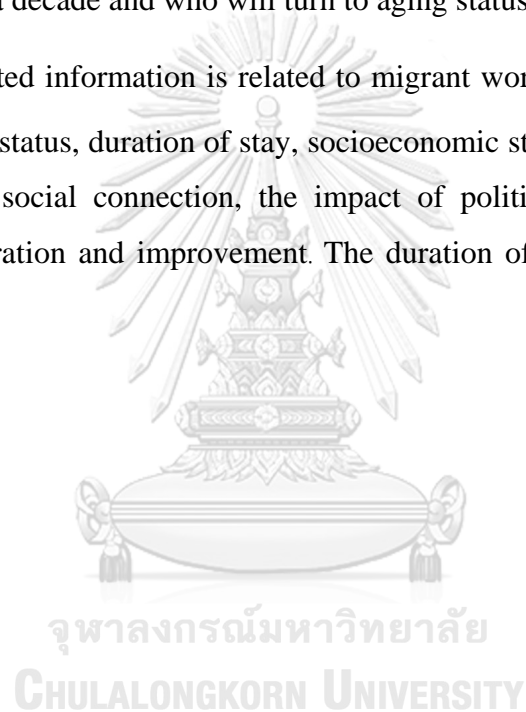
Ranong Province is chosen as the studied site. Despite the extensive length of the Thai-Myanmar border, there are only four permanent checkpoints: Mae Sai in Chiang Rai, Mae Sot in Tak, and Phu Nam Rom in Kanchanaburi, and Muang in Ranong (SiamLegalInternational 2021). Ranong province is one of the critical entry points, and it is located in southern Thailand on the Thai-Myanmar border. Ranong consists of a variety of races and religions. Still, it appears that each group of Ranong people has preserved blended traditions and the culture of each group together as well (RanongProvincialOffice 2010). According to the study by Pocapanishwong (2016), Ranong Province is full of the history of immigrants. During the British Colonial regime until World War II, Chinese immigrants from the Mainland of China, people from Myanmar, and people of Sikh, Hindu, and Muslim descent from Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, and Malaysia arrived in Ranong. Many years ago, Myanmar migrant workers built ties to the local community through religion by building a Buddhist Stupa in Ranong (Pocapanishwong 2016).

Moreover, Ranong has several resident document types, such as temporary or day-to-day border passes, which cannot be found in other areas such as Bangkok or Chiang Mai. Most Myanmar migrants in Ranong are from Southern and Southeast parts of Myanmar: Kawthaung, Dawei, Myeik, and Palaw in the Thaninthayi Division and from Mawlamyaing, Paung, and Moke Ta Ma in Mon State. Those areas are near and opposite Ranong. Migrants can enter to Ranong via the Kraburi River and

Andaman Sea by boat or on foot through natural routes (Srivirojana, N., Punping, S., Sciortino, R., and Vapattanwong, P., 2014, p.19).

Myanmar migrants in Ranong mainly work in fisheries, agriculture, construction, factories, and domestic jobs (Chatavanich, S.& Vungsiriphisal, P., 2012). There are many migrant workers from Myanmar who have stayed for more than two decades. For those reasons, Ranong is the best-suited area for conducting the research study on returning homeland of Myanmar migrant workers, especially those who have stayed more than a decade and who will turn to aging status soon

The collected information is related to migrant workers' demographic factors: age, gender, legal status, duration of stay, socioeconomic status including their family arrangement and social connection, the impact of political unrest in their origin country, and aspiration and improvement. The duration of study was June and July 2022.



CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Proportion of ageing population and migration rate have significantly increased in worldwide. When people mention about preparation for better ageing society, the group of ageing migrant workers are barely mentioned. The government policies for returning and reintegration of migrant workers especially in some ASEAN countries are not still established (Wickramasekara 2019). The information of how ageing migrant live, whether they are able return and settle down in their homeland or settle down in host country for their last breath, those types of information are rarely found.

This chapter will review the push and pull factors that influence return migration and describe the migrant workers' life quality in the host country as well as their demographic factors: age, gender, legal status, duration of stay, employment conditions and ownership of a land and house in Myanmar including their family arrangement and social connection, the impact of political unrest in their origin country, and aspiration and improvement.

2.2 Demographic factors of Myanmar migrant workers

The research study of Chantavanich, S. and Vungsiriphisal, P., in 2012 stated many **demographic factors** of Myanmar migrant workers.

2.2.1 Age group

According to Lee's theory, the age factor is crucial for deciding whether to migrate (Davisha 2017). In respect to the age, Chantavinch, S. and Vungsiriphisal, P., in 2012 study disclosed that the largest proportion of migrant age group were between

18-25 years with 38.2% and followed by the age between 26 to 35 years with 31.3%, and over 35 years was 25%, and 3.4% were under 18 years.

2.2.2 Gender

Gender not only influence migration flows but also shape the vulnerabilities, needs and risks in migration. Women faced higher risks and socioeconomic challenges than men (IOM 2017). According to Chantavanich, S. and Vungsiriphisal, P., in 2012 study, there were 53.4% of Myanmar migrant male workers and 46.6% of female workers.

2.2.3 Legal status

Chantavanich, S. and Vungsiriphisal, P., in 2012 indicated that the group of migrants who hold temporary passports with legal work permit were the largest group with 71.6%. Other groups were the migrants without work permit, and another words irregular migrants with 17.6% and the migrants who only had one year work permit with 9.8%. However, after nine years later the legal documentation process is still not convenient for migrant workers. According to Siriwat, K.'s study, legal documentation process under the MOU system has two significant problems: high cost and complicated application process. To finish the whole process, workers have to wait for two to three months (Siriwat 2019).

2.2.4 Length of stay

Regarding the longer **length of stay** of Myanmar migrant workers can be seen in the research study of Chantavanich, S. and Vungsiriphisal, P., in 2012. The researchers stated that more than 57.8% of respondents have been staying in Thailand more than five years and only 54.9% of migrant workers has plan to return back to their homeland within 1-2 years. Almost half of the respondents have no plan or no thought or not yet ready about returning because they have all family members together in Thailand (Chantavanich and Vungsiriphisal 2012). Borodak,D. and Tichit,

A., 2013 studied the link between irregular migration and duration of stay by using household and regional development data from Moldova by duration model. The study analyzes the link between duration of stay, and individual characteristic, household characteristics, social capital, destination country characteristics, home country characteristics. The findings are irregular migrants move less than regular migrants, and the duration of migration is principally determined by individual and household characteristics, including migration monetary cost. The more year migrants reside in abroad, the more inclined to return home (Borodak and Tichit 2014). The two findings in terms of duration of stay are pretty different. It might be because the background contexts of each migrant group and country including focus issues are different.

2.2.5 Employment condition

The study of Chantavanich and Vungsiriphisal 2012 stated that migrant workers worked in several sectors such as agriculture, construction, garment and plastic factory, seafood processing, interpreter and health personnel, teaching, services, and housewife. The main reason for Myanmar migrant workers entered Thailand is the wage differentiation (Thet and Pholphirul 2016). The largest proportion worked at garment, plastic factory and seafood processing with 59.3% of total respondents. Almost half of the respondents received the minimum wage as law enacted. The legal status of migrant workers directly related to the wages they received. Migrant workers who have all relevant documents received more wages compared to migrants who had only annual work permit (Chantavanich and Vungsiriphisal 2012).

2.2.6 Ownership of land and house in Myanmar

Deciding to return or not return to the homeland of migrant workers are associated with many factors. The ownership of a land and house in Myanmar might be an influential factor on decision to return the country of the origin. Myanmar migrant workers, 47.5% of respondents who were farmers and own land in Myanmar. Some of

them had a plan to go back homeland for their own business (Chantavanich and Vungsiriphisal 2012).

2.3 Family arrangement and social connection with people in Myanmar

Chantavanich and Vungsiriphisal , 2012 found that 41.7 % had their spouse living together in Thailand. The proportion of married and single marital status is almost the same. In terms of migrant workers contact with family in Myanmar, more than half of respondents, 58.3% have regularly contact with their family once or twice every month, 20.6% contact one or two time every year and the rest 20% scarcely or never contact their family because of no family member remain in Myanmar. Being with family is one of the main reasons for 36.3% of respondents returning to their homeland.

2.4 Political unrest

The study of Thet, M., and Pholphirul, P. (2015) found that after 2010, Myanmar had a political transformation from a military government to a civilian government; many migrants had planned to return to their native land. Political factor is one of the main push-pull factors for Myanmar migrant workers (Thet and Pholphirul 2016). After the military coup 2021 on February 1st, Myanmar's political turmoil worsened again, making 4.25 million migrants fall into an uncertain future. Their intention of returning native land has disappeared too. Most are concerned about their family security and daily survival in Myanmar. (Wongsuban 2021).

2.5 Aspiration and skill improvement

Personal aspiration and skill improvement influence the decision to migrate. The study by Czaika and Vothknecht, 2014 found that age and educational background are vital determinants of personal aspirations. Besides, poor households have lower future aspirations than wealthier families. Moreover, people with lower education tend to have lower aspirations. The capacity to realize and the capacity to aspire link positively but migration and aspiration are not directly linked (Czaika and Vothknecht 2014).

Wickramsekara's (2019) study indicated that skill improvement and recognition are very important for returning migrants. Returning migrant workers need to receive new occupational and social skills for sustainable return and reintegration into their homeland.

2.6 Push and pull factors

1. According to Everette Lee's migration theory (1966), the following four categories were defined. Factors associated with the area of origin or push factors.
2. Factors related to the area of destination or pull factors.
3. Intervening obstacles: distance and migration cost.
4. Personal factors or individual perceptions of push and pull factors.

Lee made a conclusion that migration is always selective and influenced by push and pull factors (Davisha, 2017). The push and Pull model explained the reasons for immigration and emigration. A push factor is unfavorable factors such as war, famine, and low job opportunities. The pull factor is a positive factor related to better living and job opportunities, and it attracts people into an area. One of the crucial migrant characteristics of personal factors mentioned by Lee is the particular stage of the life cycle, and it influences the decision of migration whether migrating or not (Davisha, 2017).

Mainly migration flows have been studied from the perspective of why they left their homeland and migrated to other host countries. However, in 2020, Mohamed and Abdul-Talib studied both push and pull factors reversely. They examined the influential factors on the return migration decision using a systematic literature review method. (Mohamed & Abdul-Talib, 2020). Their study categorized both push and pull motivational factors that influence returning homeland of migrants into three groups: **economic, psychological, and situational factors**. Some push factors of their finding for intention to return to the land are: **economic factors**: 1) unemployment and lack of economic opportunity, 2) failure to apply their skill and knowledge, **psychological factors**: 3) Altruism and patriotism, 4) family reunion, and **situational factors**: 5) failure to fit in host countries, 6) marginalization and discrimination, and 7) difficulties of being a minority in the host country.

The six pull factors for intention to returning the homeland are: **economic factors** 1) the higher opportunities for investment and business in the homeland, 2) demand for skilled labor and supportive returning homeland strategies and policies of governments, **psychological factors**, 3) identity and social cohesion, 4) reaching retirement age and wish to settle down as immigrants, **situational factors** 5) political reforms and regime change, and 6) end of civil war and improvement of the home country. Mohamed and Abdul-Talib indicated that studies about motivational pull factors of homeland country are still needed more.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter explored and summarized that the relevant literature on the demographic factors of Myanmar migrant workers such as age, gender, legal status, duration of stay, employment condition, their ownership of land and house in their homeland. Moreover, family arrangement and social connection, political unrest, and their aspiration and skill improvement and push-pull factors of returning the native

land were discussed. However, further study of the difference in length of stay, life condition of earlier migrant group which is getting ageing in host countries and, how and why they make a plan for later life will light and give clear image for designing migration program and policies in terms of return and reintegration of migrant workers.



CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This section serves as an in-depth look at the methodologies and the data used in the study. The section provides a comprehensive overview of the statistical methods use to analyze the data. In addition, this section serves as a guide to the distribution of the findings and provides a summary of the descriptive statistics used in the independent study.

3.2 Methodology

This research applied the mixed-method study design, qualitative and quantitative, with primary data sources. A survey was conducted in June and July 2022 through both phone calls and in-person with a structured questionnaire for quantitative in their local language. Regarding the qualitative approach, the study employed in-depth interviews with semi-structured. The collected information was about current living and employment conditions, documentation status, length of stay, family arrangement, political and economic unrest in the country of origin, their socioeconomic status, living and employment conditions, and their aspiration and skill improvement, including the future expectation of older migrants from Myanmar. The researcher contacted the migrant community volunteers to find the respondents who matched the target criteria.

Figure 3.1 Conceptual Framework

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

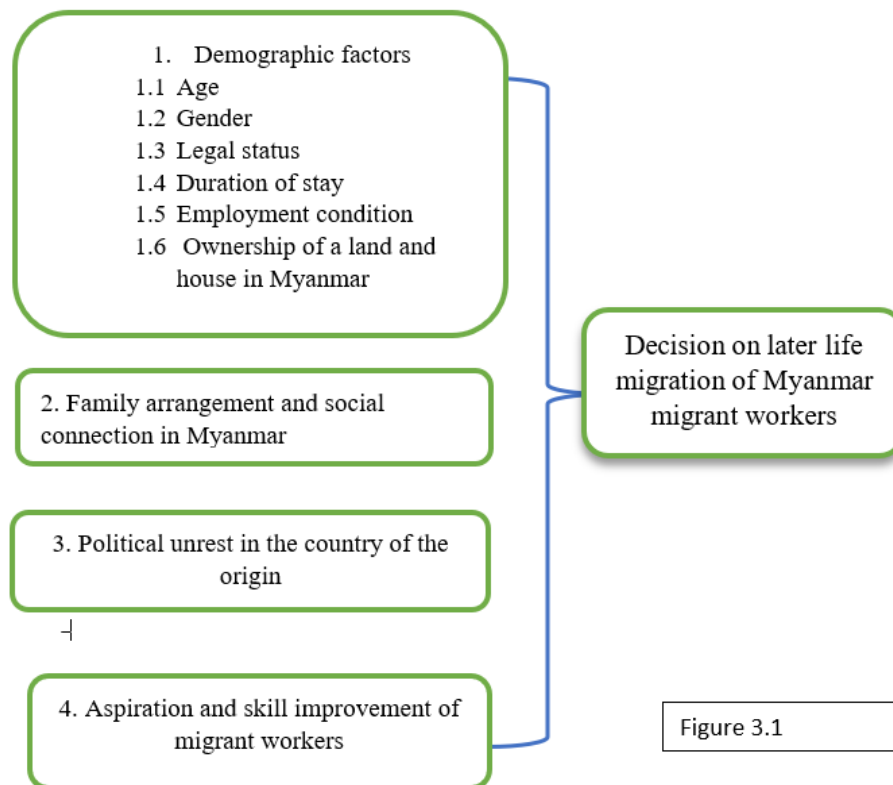


Figure 3.1

3.2.1 Target groups criteria

The target group is Myanmar migrant workers aged between 45 and 60 who have lived and worked in Thailand for more than ten years and are currently staying in Ranong Province, Thailand. Moreover, in order to get a significant result about a decision on later life migration, the study divided the purposive sample group into two sub-groups: 1) the group of migrants who have all family members together in Thailand, and 2) the group of migrants who have some family members remain in Myanmar. The cluster sampling method was used for this study because of division of two sub-groups. The research site was chosen the five Sub-districts (tambon): Khao

Niwet, Bang Rin, Pak Nam, Bang Non and Hat Som Paen, out of nine in Mueang District (Amphoe) of Ranong Province, Thailand.

3.2.2 Sample

The sample size of quantitative study were 50 respondents consisting of 27 respondents from the group 1 and 23 respondents from the group 2. For in-depth interviews, there were eight key informants. The four key informants from the group 1 and the rest 4 was from group 2. The researcher had negotiated and made an appointment for some participants. Especially the evening time around 6.30 to 8.00 p.m. is the best time for migrant workers to participate.

Eight Myanmar migrant workers aged between 45 and 60 years were interviewed. The interviewees were chosen from conducting the survey process by the researcher. The selected interviewees must have stayed in Thailand for at least 15 years or more and must be matched with the family arrangement criteria. With this family arrangement criteria, four out of eight migrants have all family members together in Thailand, and their children are currently attending Thai schools. The rest have the family members remain in Myanmar. The eight interviewed migrant workers are from the northern, middle, and southern parts of Myanmar. The name of the interviewees is defined as migrant A to H to preserve anonymity.

3.2.3 Data collection and analysis

The data and information were collected by conducting survey and in-depth interview. All respondents were explained and informed consent before conducting all interviews. The research study followed the five principle of research ethics,

- 1) obtaining informed voluntary consent,
- 2) protecting all participants' anonymity and confidentiality,
- 3) making sure that all participants get no harm or risk because of involvement,

- 4) respecting their right to withdraw at any time, and
- 5) duration of maintaining secure storage and of data.

The timing of the survey interviews last about 40 minutes and the in-depth interviews last about 30 minutes. The key informants for in-depth interviews were selected from the survey group.

The analysis of data and information is focused on their family arrangement, documentation status, employment status, income level, health condition, length of stay, migration history and their happiness level. The Logistic regression and multinomial logistic regression model were applied to facilitate the result comparison.

3.2.4 Mixed Method

The main research objective is to analyze the decision of later life migration of Myanmar older-aged migrant workers whether they settle down in host country or return their homeland. The study applied the survey dataset that had collected to examine the possible trend of making decision of later life migration of Myanmar older-aged migrant in Ranong. The Binary Logistic Regression approach was applied because the study predicted the two possible results: decision to return to Myanmar denote as “1” or not likely to return to Myanmar denoted as “0”. This tool is the best fit for dichotomy.

3.2.5 Dependent and independent variables

The dependent variable is the decision on later life migration of Myanmar migrant workers whether return homeland or not. The covariates are: legal status, length of stay, family arrangement, political and economic unrest in the origin place, migrant socioeconomic status, living and employment condition, aspiration and skill improvement.

Table 3.2 Binary logistic regression analysis

Methodology	Binary Logistic Regression Analysis
Dependent variable	
Y = Decision to later life migration,	0 = Not return to Myanmar 1 = Return to Myanmar
Independent variables	
Demographic factors	0= Male 1= Female
Gender	
Age	0 = under 55 years old 1= 55 to 60 years The age had separated into 3 categories: 45 to 49 years, 50 to 54 years 55 to 60 years. However, for this regression, study, the target had separated into two group: under 55 years old and 55 to 60 years old.
Legal status	0= Incomplete documents 1= Completed document Legal status is the type of legal documentation that migrant workers held. The legal status had separated into 4 categories: undocumented, incomplete documented, have all relevant documents, and registration card issued by Thai governments. However, for this regression, study, the target had separated into two group: incomplete documents and complete document. The respondents were asked that “Currently, what types of documents do you hold?”

<p>Duration of Stay</p>	<p>0 = less than or equal to 20 Years of living in Thailand.</p> <p>1 = More than 20 Years of living in Thailand</p> <p>Duration of stay is through the years of migrant workers consecutively have stayed in Ranong.</p> <p>For this regression, study, the target had separated into two group: less than or equivalent to 20 years of living and more than 20 years of living.</p> <p>The respondents were asked that “How many years have you been and worked in Thailand?”</p>
<p>Employment condition</p>	<p>0 = No 1 = Yes</p> <p>The participants were asked “what are you and your partner current income? (Migrant and their spouse income). Migrant employment status: The participants were asked “Currently do you still work?”</p>

<p>Ownership of a land and house in Myanmar</p>	<p>0 = No 1 = Yes</p> <p>The land and house which are owned by Myanmar migrant workers. The participants were asked “Do you own any property such as house and land in Myanmar?”</p>
<p>Family Arrangement</p>	<p>0 = All family members or close relatives stay together in Thailand 1 = Some family members or close relatives remain in Myanmar.</p> <p>Family arrangement meant whether all family stay together in Thailand or not.</p> <p>The participants were asked “Where are your children/ siblings/ parents living currently?”</p>
<p>Political and Economic Unrest in the Origin Place</p>	<p>0 = less than 0 1 = greater than 0</p> <p>The survey respondents were asked to <i>rate their willingness to return home</i> land 0 to 10 and two rounds: first for before military coup and, second round for after military coup. Then the result of willingness after coup subtracted from willingness before coup. The respondents were asked that “How do you rate your willingness to return homeland before coup?” and “How do you rate your willingness to return homeland after the military coup?”</p>
<p>Living and employment condition</p> <p>Monthly room rental</p>	<p>0 = greater than 1500 baht. 1 = less than or equivalent to 1500 baht.</p> <p>The respondents were asked “How much do you paid for monthly accommodation? Originally, the rental fee was divided into 5 groups. For this regression study purpose separated to only two groups.</p>

Income level of migrant	<p>0= under 9000Baht 1= More than 9000Baht</p> <p>Actually, the income level was separated into 5 categories: 0 for “under 5000Baht”, 1 for “between 5001and 9000Baht”, 2 for 9001 and 12000Baht”, 3 for “Between12001and 15000 Baht”, 4 for “Between 15000 Baht and above”. For the regression study, it is divided into two as above. The question was “What is your current income?”</p>
<p>Aspiration and skill improvement</p> <p>Personal aspiration to migration</p>	<p>0 = No 1 = Yes</p> <p>Aspiration to migrate other more urban areas: the participants were asked “Have you ever thought to move other big cities such as Phuket, Bangkok?”</p>
Thai language fluency	<p>0 = less than 5 1 = greater than or equivalent to 5</p> <p>Language the participants were asked “<i>How do you rate your Thai language skill?</i>” It was divided into two groups: less than 5 and greater than or equivalent to 5.</p>
Working Skill that received in Thailand	<p>0 = No 1 = Yes</p> <p>Skill improvement: the respondents were asked “Did you receive any working skills during working in Thailand?”</p>



CHAPTER 4

Research Findings

This chapter describes the result of the research. As this study applies a subsequential mixed method, this section will firstly describe the result of the quantitative analysis, followed by more explanation supported by the in-depth interviews.

4.1 Quantitative analysis

4.1.1 General information of older-aged Myanmar migrant workers in Ranong, Thailand

Migration between Myanmar and Thailand (Kawthaung-Ranong border) has existed over many decades. In 2020, there are more than 50,000 Myanmar migrant workers in Ranong (OCHA 2020). The survey study is conducted with 50 respondents in five sub-districts (Tambon).

The survey study found that a sizeable proportion of the older-aged Myanmar migrant workers who consecutively have lived in Ranong for more than ten years existed. Within five sub-districts of Ranong Province, half of the respondents have

stayed in Ranong for more than 23 years. The 50 respondents consisted of 17 males and 33 females. Most Myanmar migrant workers in Ranong are from the southern part of Myanmar, with 58% of all respondents. The rest are 38% from the middle and 4% from the northern region. 40% of total respondents are aged between 55 to 60 years.

Almost half of the respondents have stayed with their spouses, and 20% are widowed. 27 out of 50 respondents have all family members together in Thailand. 40% of the migrant respondents aged between 55 to 60 years have more children than the rest at least three to a maximum of eight children. About 80% of the respondents had finished only primary and secondary education levels. Only 2% earned a university degree.

Table 4.1 Descriptive Result and Discussion

		N	Marginal Percent
Decision likely to return Myanmar	Return	26	52%
	Not return	24	48%
Age	45 to 49 years	15	30%
	50 to 54 years	15	30%
	55 years to 60 years	20	40%
Gender	Male	17	34%
	Female	33	66%
Legal status	Incomplete document	3	6%
	Have all relevant document	25	50%
	Border pass	10	20%
	No documented	6	12%
	Other un-registration card	6	

	by Thai Gov (Zero head ten years card)		12%
Duration of stay	10 to 16 years	10	20%
	17 to 22 years	15	30%
	23 years and above	25	50%
Employment condition	Working	35	70%
	Jobless	15	30%
Ownership a land and house in Myanmar	Yes	25	50%
	No	25	50%
Family arrangement	All family members stay together in Thailand	27	54%
	Some family members remain in Myanmar (Children, siblings, parents)	23	46%
Education background	No schooling	1	2%
	Primary	24	48%
	Secondary	15	30%
	Tertiary	9	18%
	University	1	2%

Types of job	Plantation	2	4%
	Seafood processing	8	16%
	Construction	7	14%
	Restaurant	7	14%
	Domestic labor	11	22%
	Unemployment	15	30%
Country that migrant child received the highest education	Thailand	22	44%
	Myanmar	28	56%
Income level of migrant	Under 5000 baht	17	34%
	5001-9000baht	17	34%
	9001-12000baht	15	30%
	12001- 15000 baht	1	2%
	15001 baht and above	0	0%
Thai language fluency	0 to 2 “very poor”,	24	48%
	3 to 4 “poor”,	10	20%
	5 to 6 “acceptable”,	10	20%
	7 to 8 “good”,	5	10%
		1	2%
	9 to 10 “very good”		2%

Skill improvement in Thailand	No, do not received at all	16	32%
	Yes, received somehow.	34	68%
		50%	100%

4.1.2 Results of the binary logistic analysis

This section describes the result of the logistic analysis. The overall prediction of the model is correct at 80%, which means it is a pretty good level. The result of the omnibus test is .003, which is less than 0.05. The Cox & Snell R Square is .410, and Nagelkerke R Square is .547, less than 1. The result of the Hosmer and Lemeshow test is .407, over the significant level, which shows the high level of the goodness of fit to the model.

The four variables are statistically significant: skill improvement in Thailand, aspiration for migration, political and economic unrest, and living conditions or monthly rental conditions have impacts on the decision to return to Myanmar, while other variables such as being together with family or family arrangement, educational background of the migrant worker, migrant ownership of land and house in Myanmar, their income level, their employment condition, and Thai language fluency did not.

The coefficient of skills improvement is statistically significant ($\text{sig} = .044 < 0.05$). Exp (B) for skill improvement is 15.348, meaning the migrant workers who received working skills are 15.348 times more likely to return to Myanmar than those who did not receive working skills in Thailand. The receiving working skill positively affects a decision to return homeland.

The coefficient of Aspiration for migration is negatively significant ($\text{sig} = .007 < 0.05$). Exp (B) for Aspiration for migration is .055, meaning the migrant

workers who have aspirations of migration are .055 times less likely to return to Myanmar compared to those who have no ambition for migration. The aspiration of migration has a negative association with a decision to return.

The coefficient of room rental conditions is negatively significant ($\text{sig} = .028 < 0.05$). Exp (B) for a living condition or their room rental condition is .078, which mean the migrant workers who have higher living condition are .078 times less likely to return to Myanmar compared to those with poor living conditions. The living condition has significantly negatively associated with the decision to return.

The coefficient of political unrest in the origin place is significant ($\text{sig} = .028 < 0.05$). Exp (B) for political unrest is 0.025, meaning the political unrest in the original country made migrant workers 0.025 times less likely to return to Myanmar compared to no political unrest condition. Political turmoil has significantly negatively associated with the decision to return.

Exp (B)	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.
Employment condit-	-.227	.943	.058	.810
Education backgrou-	.837	.913	.841	2.309
Ownership in MM	-1.646	1.073	2.354	.125



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Table 4.1.2 Logistic regression result: The influence factors on decision on later life migration of Myanmar migrant worker

Income	.082	.826	.010	.921	1.085
Room Rental	-2.555	1.084	5.551	.018*	.078
Family arrangement	-.533	1.283	.173	.678	.587
Political unrest	-3.676	1.674	4.823	.028*	.025
Skill improvement	2.731	1.354	4.068	.044*	15.348
Thai language fluenc.	.353	1.010	.122	.727	1.423
Aspiration	-2.899	1.079	7.214	.007**	.055
Constant	2.384	1.667	2.046	.153	10.850



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4.2 Qualitative analysis

4.2.1 Demographic Factors of Myanmar migrant workers in Ranong

4.2.1.1 Age and gender

According to the survey result, the shared of migrant workers who aged between 45 to 49 years are 30%, age 50 to 54 years are 30. The age 55 to 60 years are 40% as the largest group of among respondents. The 50 respondents consisted of 17 males and 33 females. The study found that there is a relationship between life satisfaction and gender. According to the survey result, males are less satisfied with their current life condition than females. 41% of male respondents rate unsatisfied with current life

conditions. 29 % of males rate life satisfaction as neutral. Only 9% of female respondents rate unsatisfied level, 42% rate neutral, and the rest rated satisfied to very satisfied with their life condition. 65% of Male respondents' family members remain in Myanmar oppositely to females. For this reason, it could be considered that less satisfaction with present life condition of male migrant workers might associate with not being together with family as well as the matter of gender.

4.2.1.2 legal status

In terms of legal status, three out of eight in-depth interviewed migrant workers aged 60 years old have only expired documents. Those older face difficulties and fewer work opportunities compared to younger migrant workers. According to the Ministry of Interior, Thailand, migrant workers aged over 55 years are not allowed to apply for work permits. Their health condition is getting poor while their children need more money for higher education. The older-aged migrant workers are deprived of applying for legal documents and work opportunities.

Only 50% of respondents have complete documents. It means they have all relevant documents such as passport with stamped visa, health insurance or social insurance and work permit. More than half of the respondents who have all completed relevant documents had applied their documents via brokers. Mostly they have to pay between 10500 and 16000 baht for their documentation fee.

Figure 4.2.1 Documentation fee for migrant workers (ILO 2020b)

- ▶ visa fee: THB3,800 for two years (official fee is set to THB1,900/year);
- ▶ work permit fee: THB1,900 for two years, including administrative process fee;
- ▶ medical check-ups: THB500;
- ▶ medical insurance fee: varies between zero, THB500, and THB3,200 per year;¹²
- ▶ ID card issuance fee: THB80; and
- ▶ deposit fees: THB1,000.

According to ILO, documentation fee for one year for one migrant worker is about 6,630 baht without deposit. The deposit will not be necessary for those who longer duration of staying in Thailand because the deposit 1,000 baht has to be paid at only the first time (ILO 2020b).

Another problem that migrant workers often faced is being cheated on duration of health insurance and social insurance contribution amount. Many of respondents narrated their bad experience concerning to health insurance. The broker charged them 3500 baht for health insurance fee for one year but when they received their insurance card, it had only last 3 months health insurance. The social insurance contribution also has similar problems. Most migrant respondents don't know any information about their contribution such as how many months they had already paid it.

Beside the passport and the pink card, there is another type of document called Non-Thai ID card or non-registration card, issued by the Thai government. 20% of respondents, who are aged 55 to 60 years have this Non-Thai ID card. With that card, older-aged migrants are able to stay Thailand without any other documents is needed. This type of document holders is allowed to travel within a province, limited area. If they would like to go another province or out of the country, they need to ask permission for each time. All respondents who have this type of ID card said that they

will definitely settle down in Thailand even they earn only few incomes. They would not go back to Myanmar.

However, the respondents who have all relevant documents have another interesting response. 44% (11 people out of 25 person) of this complete document holders less likely to return to Myanmar. Some respondents are probably tied with their children education in Thai side. Only 56% wish to return the homeland.

“The registration process is more complicated and higher cost compared to the past decades. At the present, in Ranong, most migrant workers earn around 7,000 Baht per month but the registration and documentation fee are very high around 12000-18000 per time because of broker fee” (Migrant D, Personal communication, female, 52 years, 22 June 2022).

“As an older migrant worker, now I have only expired documents, no job and no money. My health condition is also weak. I lost my wife last year. Cause her long-term sickness, I have no saving left. Now I am quite old. Some of my children who stay in Bangkok sometime send remittance to me. I also keep and sell some plastic trash to cover my day-to-day expense. My life is miserable. I want to return my homeland but I cannot see my future” (Migrant F, Personal communication, Male, 60 years, 29 June 2022).

It was found that most family members stay together in one rented room. About two-thirds of migrant workers spent an average of 1,500baht on renting rooms per month. The space and privacy are quite limited. Most Myanmar migrant workers stay like a community because they tend to stay in long terraced houses. Most of them spent about 30 baht for each meal per person. Almost all of them prepare food for their own family and rarely buy from outside in order to save cost.

4.2.1.3 Length of stay

The household characteristics, family arrangement and income level are significant factors for longer duration of stay in Thailand. The migrant workers age between 45 to 49 have the largest proportion of the longer length of stay; more than 23 years, among other aged groups. 32% of respondent migrants have to take care their two generation. It could be assumed that they are a part of the sandwich generation because they have to look after their elderly parents and their children concurrently. Those migrants have at least 2 dependents to maximum 6 dependents. The living cost in Myanmar are not much different from Thailand while their income level is low. It brings the migrant workers to unable to accomplish their migration objectives such as saving, financial capital, lands or a beautiful new house.

Most migrants recalled that at the beginning of entering Thailand, they had planned to work for only 2 to 3 years for financial capital or buying a new house. They had never thought that such an extended length of stay, more than two decades abroad they would be in Thailand. According to survey and in-depth interview, the main reason of long length of stay in Thailand is not accomplished of their migration objectives. They used to have a sweet dream to return their homeland with their financial capital that they earned from Thailand. However, decade after decade, the time has flied and they have been still struggling in Thailand. They lost their dreams and their aspiration faded away.

“Income and expense here are almost exactly the same amount and no more saving left. However, compare to Myanmar, Thailand is easier for daily survival at least for food and monthly rental. In addition, Thailand has higher living standard and more convenient than Myanmar.” (Migrant B, Personal communication, Male, aged 52 years, 29 June 2022)

Another reason of migrant respondents not yet return homeland even though they have faced income and expense amount are almost the same and no saving left, is lack of economic or work opportunity in their homeland. Many respondents said they are lower educated persons, very low chance to get a job in Myanmar. Day-to-day survival will be extremely difficult. All interviewees mentioned that only 5 to 10% of migrant workers have some improvement in their life. Most migrant workers have been the same situation and not different from last decades, still struggling for survival.

“Next five years, until my age turns 65 years, I probably would still stay at Ranong, Thailand. I would probably work as long as I am still healthy and able to work. I have been worked in Ranong more than 30 years. Now all my document is expired. I want to renew my all document. I worried for renewing document be unable. But I heard some are able to apply it. But I am not sure either. I am waiting the news.”
(Migrant H, Personal communication, Female, aged 60 years, 29 June 2022)

The older-aged migrants are facing the uncertainty. Some 60 years old have complete document while some have not. Some got information about cheating age process and cost while others said there is some extension for age limitation.

4.2.1.4 Employment conditions

The study discovered that the most frequency type of job that women workers do is domestic help and follow by seafood processing. Most male respondents work at construction and seafood processing. All respondents have worked in informal sector which mean most of their wages tend to be lower than minimum daily wage that enacted by law. Almost one thirds of migrant respondents are under unemployment status.

Work opportunity is one of the undeniable important factors for Myanmar migration. The outbreak of Covid-19 incurred the great trends of returning migration across the world especially in Asian countries (Kang and Latoja 2022). However, the

elder Myanmar migrant workers in Ranong had another different story. Even during the peak of Covid-19 outbreak, they did not move back to Myanmar like many other newcomers. Some of respondents said that they still were offered some part time domestic help or clean jobs or some of their employers still paid some wages even fewer than before or they could borrow some money for survival from community people who are nearby. Most of them work with the same boss and they believe that they have more survival chances if they still in Thailand. They have somehow tied with Thai and migrant communities. Even Thai Ranong residents and older-aged Myanmar migrants not close to each other much but quite familiar. Once the researcher collected the data in a field, while interviewing to one elder male migrant worker in front of the grocery shop. After finishing the interview with that elder man, a Thai lady, the owner of the shop suddenly come out and talked to the researcher about the man's behavior such as how this old man drunk beer a lot every day and being hopeless. Many Thai Ranong residents tend to recognize Myanmar migrant workers who have stayed for many years even not familiar. That is an unrecognized and unrepresented phenomenon. Both communities recognize who is who such as how many children they have, what jobs they do, etc. A number of Ranong residents, Thai people, especially middle and ground-level people, whenever they need workers, they know quite exactly who or which migrants to be contacted for that type of jobs. It could probably be a unique characteristic of Ranong Province, border area communities.

According to their rating to a healthy level, only 52% rated as healthy and very healthy, 38% rated as neutral, and 10% rated as unhealthy and very unhealthy. About 40% of respondents replied that they had taken medicine every day, some prescribed by doctors, and most bought their own medicine selves. The healthy rating level for both males and females are the same. 35.3% (6 out of 17) of male respondents have expensed about 1500 baht and above per month on alcohol, cigarette, and chewing betel nuts while females are barely.

“Currently, I have no hope with political unrest and the military government condition. We, migrant workers, are forgotten citizens of Myanmar. I am now paralyzed and in severely poor health without anybody caring.” (Migrant E, Personal communication, Male, aged 52 years, 29 June 2022).

4.2.1.5 Ownership of a land and house in Myanmar

Half of the respondents own no land or house in Myanmar. Concerning land ownership and house ownership in Myanmar, aged 45 to 49 years own 60%, aged 50 to 54 years own 33%, and aged 55 to 60 years 55%. However, there is no difference in the decision to return native land between migrant workers who have lands and houses and those who do not own any lands and houses. This research finding is slightly different from Chantavanich and Vungsiriphisal's 2012 finding, which was that migrant workers who owned the farm and lands in Myanmar have a propensity to return to their homeland. The differences occurred probably because of their occupational background, size of assets, and the duration of their stay abroad.



4.2.2 Family arrangement and social connection in Myanmar

Most Myanmar migrant workers in Ranong are from the southern part of Myanmar, with 58% of all respondents. The rest are 38% from the middle and 4% from the northern region. 40% of total respondents are aged between 55 to 60 years.

Almost half of the respondents have stayed with their spouses, and 20% are widowed. 27 out of 50 respondents have all family members together in Thailand. 40% of the migrant respondents aged between 55 to 60 years have more children than the rest at least three to a maximum of eight children. About 80% of the respondents had finished only primary and secondary education levels. Only 2% earned a university degree.

Among 50 respondents, 27 respondents have all family members in Thailand and 23 respondents have some family stay in Myanmar. 65% of Male respondents' family members remain in Myanmar. Males have more willingness to return than females (12 out of 17 rates higher willingness). Reversely, almost 64% of female have lived with their all-family member together in Thailand. This observation ensured that being together with family is one of the major important factors of decision to return home.

In term of return time to their homeland, 16% (8 people) never go back to their home. 60% of respondents went back to their origin place during 15 to 20 years only 1 to 5 time. It means return once in every three to four years. Only 16% back to homeland once or twice in a year. However, it also depends on the distance of their hometown. The farther are hometown, the lesser return time to hometown. However, overall, the number of return time to homeland of migrant workers are pretty low because of their low income.

“I always want to go and see my three children and my mother but I realized that whenever I went back to Myanmar the debt accumulated. So, I better send my money as the remittance instead of expense on travelling cost. I supposed that it would be better for them. I divorced with my husband since I was a young age. So, I have to deal everything all alone.” (Migrant F, Personal communication, female, aged 52 years, 29 June 2022).

Regarding to migrant children's education, there were several factors for a migrant worker to think such as political, economic, social, and individual factors associated to choose which country, Thailand or Myanmar will be the best fit for their children and, their budget and life. Some have close family or relatives such as mothers or grandmothers in Myanmar. So, it is convenient for them to send their children to Myanmar while some are not. Those who have no close family or relatives, have to raise their children all alone. Besides sending their children to the migrant

learning centers, seems like they had no other choice because in the past or before the year 2005, migrant children were not able to access the Thai education system. That generation faced failure to meet education opportunities. However, after 2005, all migrant children are allowed to free Thai education for 15 years regardless of their legal status or nationality according to the 2005 Cabinet resolution on Education for Unregistered Person (UNICEF 2019).

More than half of migrant workers' children still study in Thai schools at various levels, from primary to university. According to the in-depth interview, it found that after the year 2005, the number of migrant children who joined Thai education increased year by year. The interviewee narrated that around the years 2008 to 2015, most migrant workers near his community sent their children to Thai schools. However, after the year 2015, the political transformation in Myanmar, from a military government to a civilian government, some migrant parents started to send their children back to Myanmar for education. It could be assumed that politics, country policies; structural aids and life plan are deeply associated. Regarding the place and time of migrant children education, it could be concluded that there were four waves of migrant children's education during three decades: before 2005, after 2005, after the 2015 Myanmar political transformation, and after the 2021 military coup. The legislation and political changes have shaped migrant workers' decisions for their children's future and education and their later life. The children who received education opportunities under the 2005 Cabinet Resolution on Education for Unregistered Person now have tertiary and secondary levels, and some are in the first year of university education. At the same time, their parents' age is close to the unallowed working-aged 55 years old. It might be called that circumstance as a structural conflict for family unity. All this thing is a nightmare for migrant worker families. In addition, the outbreak of Covid-19 and economic unrest in the homeland which is the consequence of political instability has impacted many of their lives.

4.2.3 Political unrest in the country of origin

The current political and economic unrest in the homeland significantly affects their decision to return. Myanmar migrants feel disappointed and hopeless. Political instability and economic growth are profoundly associated (Alesina, Özler et al. 1996), and it also means they have more scarcity of work opportunities than before. The in-depth interview and survey study found that 68% rate 5 to 10 out of 10 for their willingness to return homeland (including both temporary or permanent status) before the military coup. However, the desire to return to their country after the military coup, their rates of 5 to 10 out of 10 only remain at 10%.

“Since the political transition and ruled by civilian government, people here eagerly move back to Myanmar. Many parents planned to send their children back to Myanmar for education. At that time many job opportunities were opening up. Myself also had planned to go back Myanmar within a few years but since the military coup, my plan has completely changed. If the military government continue rule, my last breath will be in Thailand.” (Migrant B, Personal communication, 52years, 29 June 2022).

4.2.4 Aspiration and potential trends of decision on later life migration

Regarding aspiration and potential trends of the decision on later life migration of elder-aged Myanmar migrants in Ranong: the border town, there are two unmissable factors: distance of migration and ability of migrants are need to be accounted. Ghamz E Ali Siyal, 2017, conducted a study and made proof the theory of distance law of migration by George Kingsley Zipf, 1949 which explained how the magnitude of migration is inversely proportional to the distance traveled and the law 1 of migration by Ernest George Ravenstein, 1885 which indicated about the majority of migrants move only a short distance in any one migration that is in line with his Pakistan study (Siyal August 2017). This current study agree that these laws are still correct for Myanmar migrant workers until this present era.

The current study also learned that the highest significant migrated reason especially elder-aged Myanmar migrant workers in Ranong Province, Thailand was the distance factor. The short distance and geographically close to their homeland were mentioned the highest percentage compare to other factors such as having social network or migration cost. Another meaning of short distance can be interpreted as safety, easier and cheaper migration cost.

In addition, more than 80% of them had never moved to another province of Thailand. The main reasons for not moving out of Ranong Province that they mentioned are 1) all family members be together because different types of documentation are available in border areas such as border pass and it allows them able to reside legally 2) close to their homeland, and familiarity with the place. The researcher observed that another unmentioned factor of longer length of stay in Ranong is likely legal status, before 2008, Myanmar migrant workers were limited to stay within a province. The travelling between provinces were restricted. The tie and reason of unmoved out from Ranong for most longer stay elder-aged migrants were probably the result of those restriction. According to gender perspective, male workers likely have more experience of migration out from Ranong with 41% while female workers only have 15%.

In term of their education background, 80% of who have no schooling and primary education level less likely to move out from Ranong. On the other hand, the percentage of moving out from Ranong of secondary and tertiary education level migrant workers are a bit higher than the lower education workers.

When the study examined the relationship between their language skill and the number of migrations after arrived and stayed some length in Ranong Province, it can see the different percentage among the groups. The group rated 0 to 2 for language skill of themselves have only 14% of experience in moving outside Ranong Province

while the group rated 3 to 10 have much higher percentage of experience in moving outside.

Moreover, the researcher discovered a linkage between the number of movements after arrived Thailand and the decision of later life migration. Migrant workers who have experience in migration after arrived Thailand have more propensity to return Myanmar with 75% while migrant workers who have no experience migration after arrived Thailand have only 45% of intention to return Myanmar. On top of that, the researcher observed that the migrant respondents who have language skill have better life condition than those who not. In addition, many respondents mentioned the importance of personal behaviors and capabilities for a better life. Many interviewees commented that individual behavior, such as not gambling or being an alcoholic, hard-working and self-improvement, such as language skills and skillset that relevant to work, are fundamental to life improvement.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

A person whether migrating or settling down in a place, is associated with several push and pull factors: individual, societal and structural. According to the in-depth interview and survey study, it could be concluded that a large number of older-aged Myanmar migrant workers have stayed continuously in Ranong Province, Thailand, for more than two decades have been residing. Most of them are failing to accomplish their migration objectives and are less likely to return to their homeland in the future. It is a bitter and undeniable truth that a gloomy phenomenon exists among older-age migrant workers, especially 55 to 60 years, those with no home, no hope, and no job with poor health conditions.

In terms of gender, male workers tend to migrate without family reversely with females. Moreover, the study found that male workers have more willing to return their homeland. It is obvious that there is a link between being with family members and intention to returning homeland of migrant workers. While their older age and being with family are push factors of the host country, they are struggling with the heavier push factors from the homeland, which is called life safety.

Regarding legal status, the unreturnable elder-aged migrants, especially those aged 55 years and above, are pushed to be illegal while their families are still working and studying. Moreover, the legal documentation registration system is complicated, and takes too long. It seems like most migrant workers must rely on the brokers to run the process, and they are charged double time to almost triple the cost. It might be one of the root causes that those migrants hardly get out of financial hardship. The survey study found that some of age 60 years have all relevant documents. Thus, the process and the age restriction are unclear for migrant workers.

Most of them are poor educated and have worked as low-skilled workers. Some of migrant workers aware that they have not much hope if they return to their homeland without enough financial capital. The main reason of longer length of stay for Myanmar migrant workers are failure to accomplish their dream because of their low income and overweight family burdens. Their life and working condition have not much supported their skill improvement. Almost 90% of migrant workers who have worked in Ranong for many decades do not significantly improve their lives because of their low income in Thailand and high living costs in their homeland. The level of individual improvement might also depend on household characteristics. The migrant workers with more family members to take care of are more likely to wrestle with financial difficulties, especially those with children attending higher levels of education, high school, and university levels, and elderly people with poor health conditions. It seems like they hardly escape from their poverty cycle. Only half of them tend to have a land or a house in Myanmar but they mentioned that very small space.

Larger number of migrant respondents have stayed with all family member in Thailand. The survey found that overall, homeland returning times among migrant workers are very low. Because of their poor income, the number of times they returned to the family in Myanmar can count by one hand's fingers through the years in Thailand over two decades. Their low-income status not only impacts their families and themselves but also affects their social connections. Consequently, some of their relationship in Myanmar decreased, and some lost their connection. Moreover, the more they age, the more they earn less.

Current Myanmar political turmoil cause Myanmar migrant influx into Thailand many folds. According to survey and in-depth interview found that the willingness to return native land are obviously different and significantly low compared to before and after the Myanmar military coup 2021. Most of migrants' future plan are blurred including their children education and their settlement.

However, older-aged Myanmar migrant workers in Ranong experienced not that terrible or not that good. Their circumstance could be metaphors for the boiling-frog phenomenon because their situation was able to struggle and survive. However, they might face a dead end at their elder age or later life.

5.2. Policy recommendation

Lagging or lack of government collaboration and preparation for the return and reintegration process caused phenomenon of the unreturnable older migrant workers. Even though the return and reintegration of Myanmar migrant workers were defined in MOU 2003, the actual process for migrant workers between Thailand and Myanmar is still invisible. The origin and destination countries should cooperate for migrant workers to develop hard and soft skills such as opening job training centers, language centers, self-improvement programs, skill reorganization, and certification services.

Regarding the result of the study, improvement or receiving of working skills is one of the significant factors that lead migrant workers likely to return to their homeland. It could be assumed that those who have somehow received working skills are more likely to have hope and ways in life. Therefore, delivering job training and setting up skill improvement centers should be prioritized by both governments.

Moreover, setting up information centers in the host country to distribute work opportunities and information about the origin country will be essential factors that could motivate migrants to return to their homeland and better change for their entrepreneurship.

Regarding the registration process in Thailand, since digitalization has advanced, file the application form to obtain a visa and work permit in the way of the top-to-toe, the easiest and most convenient ways. The Thai government should design the application so migrants and employers can quickly meet each other under the

government's control. Health insurance should be promoted to be more accessible and more disseminated on the importance of health insurance among older migrants. At the same time, it could relieve the burden on employers either. The urgent cooperation regarding older-aged migrant workers among international non-government organizations (INGOs), UN organizations, Myanmar, and the government is needed to assist marginalized groups. Moreover, early preparation and support should be carried out to prevent history repeats itself. There is also a need to provide protective health measures and pre-retirement practices to older migrants.

When the global population is shifting into an aging society, so do the migrant workers, who are a part of the worldwide population. Therefore, the findings of this study could be a part of supportive helps for setting up effective migrant workers, especially for aging migrant workers' return and reintegration policies among ASEAN countries, especially Myanmar, in the future.

5.3 Limitation and suggestion for future research

There was a limitation with time constraint and difficulties in reaching out to the target group. Migrants, particularly those without valid documents, tend to hide, making it difficult to locate them. In addition, because of the ongoing political unrest in their country, they were afraid to participate in the survey. Future research might consider these aspects to outreach to them.

Furthermore, the survey used in this study was conducted in Ranong Province. As Ranong Province is a border area, there are several types of resident documents, which may cause migrant workers' decisions to differ from those in non-border areas. It is suggested for the future research to conduct a comparative study on this topic in other areas such as Bangkok, Phuket, and Chiang Mai.

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