

The Impact of Government Policies on Bangladeshi Labour Migration to Malaysia

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This study investigates the role of bilateral agreements, visa regulations, and social integration policies regarding the labour migration of Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia, considering various factors and agreements like the G2G program, MoU, and MM2H.

A primary quantitative approach was used to gather relevant information on Bangladeshi labour migration. Data was collected from 61 participants directly involved in this migration. The dependent and independent variables informed the question formulation, with IBM SPSS software used for analysis.

Statistical analysis indicated extensive use of employment passes (EP) among Bangladeshi workers, characterized by low skill and educational qualifications.

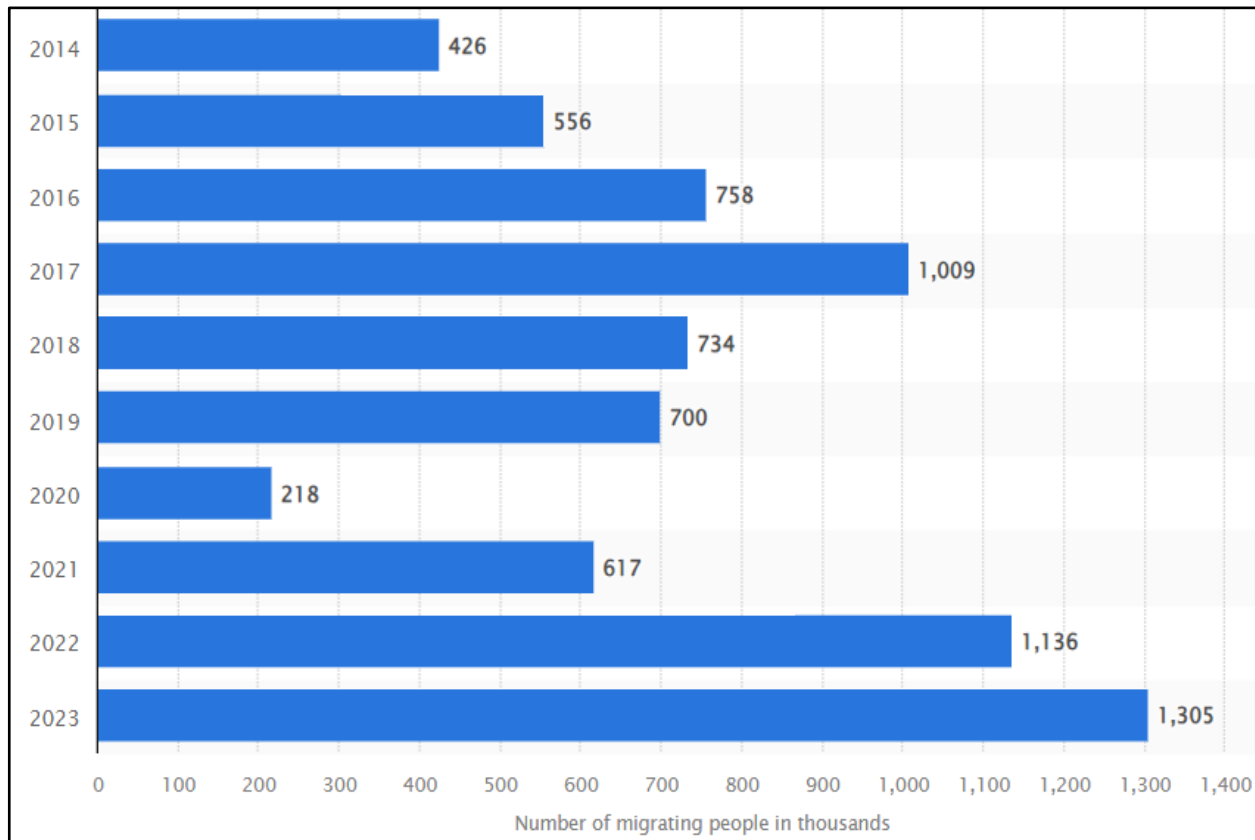
This study provides insights into the implications of Malaysian government policies and recommends strategic options for performance improvement.

Keywords: migrant labourer, G2G program, MoU, Malaysian government, recruitment

INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh's labour migration to Malaysia has long been a significant economic pathway, affecting the labour markets and developmental agendas of both the nations. Administrative policies – varying from bilateral contracts to recruitment regulations – play a remarkable role in changing the sustainability, scale, and structure of these migration flows. A few of the primary factors that have affected this labour migration in Malaysia are the resilience of policies in the labour market, immigration policies, economic opportunities, and social integration policies. As highlighted by Low (2020), the emergence of this critical transformation in the conceptualisation of government is capable of influencing and changing business opportunities. A huge rise in getting business licenses is observed among the Malaysian foreigners, among which, the percentage of Bangladeshi people is huge. Nearly 1.3 thousand people of migrating labourers from Bangladesh moved in 2023 (von Kameke, 2024).

FIGURE 1
FLOW OF LABOUR MIGRATION FROM BANGLADESH



Source: von Kameke, 2024

Other than that, a total of 10 International Recruiting Agencies, also known as IRAs are provided with potential responsibilities to operate and control the migrated labour recruitment activities in Malaysia. It is observed that the memorandum of understanding or MOU is one of the key aspects influencing the Malaysian government to ensure possible employment opportunities and maintenance of labour rights among Bangladeshi migrated labourers (Palma, 2024). Besides IRAs, the Bangladeshi High Commission in Malaysia is also responsible for the promotion of some of the key factors that have incredibly influenced the migration of Bangladeshi labourers in this region, which include resilience labour agreement policies, G2G program and social integration norms.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this research include

- To investigate the implications of visa regulations through EP and S pass on Bangladeshi labour migration in Malaysia
- To explore the effects of bilateral agreements on influencing Bangladeshi labourers to migrate to Malaysia
- To analyse the implications of social integration policies towards creating advantages for Bangladeshi migrated labourers in Malaysia
- To illustrate the significance of labour agreements regarding Bangladeshi labour migration in Malaysia

RESEARCH GAPS

The lack of availability of published studies relating to the role and significance of government support toward Bangladeshi migrated labourers in Malaysia has led to the incorporation of primary quantitative research creating a critical research gap. The lack of qualitative data is identified to be the main research gap in the present study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Bangladeshi Labour Migration to Malaysia

Labourer migration has turned out to be a common aspect in the modern era, which is mainly caused by a vast range of factors. As revealed by Uddin & Mohammed (2020), critical implications of the recruitment agencies are being observed regarding Bangladeshi labour migration in Malaysia due to the increased necessity of training and cultural knowledge. Malaysia's labour market reopening is observed to hold an incredible influence towards the increased migration interest among Bangladeshi labourers, whereas high migration costs and labour exploitations are observed to be threatening this aspect. Despite being a popular migration destination for Bangladeshi labourers, concerns have been raised against Malaysia's labour agreement regarding channelling and bribery (Anderson, 2021). The percentage of Bangladeshi labour migration to Malaysia is relatively higher compared to other neighbourhood nations, which reflects the economic and legislative opportunities and support provided by the government.

Visa Regulations

Visa regulations are among the most significant and relevant aspects involving the immigration process. Besides this, the employment pass or EP is observed to be a key process for issuing passes to people that the Expatriate Committee or other regulatory bodies have approved (Imi.gov.my, 2024). Other than that, the skilled employee pass is known as the S pass and both of these passes are known to be supportive of enabling migrated labourers to indulge in different professions in Malaysia for a certain period. There are certain visa regulations that Bangladeshi labourers are required to maintain, which mainly involve a severe restriction on employment opportunities as they are mainly provided with a temporary employment pass. As argued by Norhana & Noreha (2021), Malaysia's foreign labour entry aspects are observed to be directly correlated with certain transformations in sustainable development within the country. Thereafter, the main visa regulations for Bangladeshi labour migration in Malaysia include temporary employment pass, skilled employment pass or S pass and labourers pass.

Bilateral Agreements

A bilateral agreement or contract can be defined as a specific type of agreement conducted between two different parties or nations regarding any specific purpose. In the case of Malaysia, the practice of recruiting a larger number of migrated labourers from Bangladesh is widely known. The government-to-government or G2G is a similar type of bilateral agreement between Malaysia and Bangladesh. As mentioned by Mobarak, Sharif & Shrestha (2023), Malaysia has introduced visa lotteries for low-skilled Bangladeshi contract labourers through this G2G program. Besides this, G2G programs have also decreased the migration cost between Bangladesh and Malaysia. As argued by Ullah & Khadiza (2021), the G2G program has increased transparency along with reducing costs associated with the migration procedures. Therefore, it can be mentioned that this specific bilateral agreement between Bangladesh and Malaysia has created potential benefits for migrated labourers by enabling them to access employment opportunities and government support.

Labour Agreement Policies

The implementation of labour agreement policies is intended to create employment and economic opportunities for contract workers, which can also be maintained through signing a memorandum of understanding or MoU between two different nations. As observed by Choo Chin (2020), Bangladesh and

Malaysia have signed an MoU to ensure the fostering of ethical practices relating to labour migration along with reducing migration costs. The most recent MoU signed between Bangladesh and Malaysia is expected to remain effective by December 2026, reflecting that this is the current MoU between these nations influencing labour migration and employment of Bangladeshi workers (Malaymail, 2021). This MoU has outlined potential responsibilities for both of these countries along with enhancing migration resilience for low-skilled Bangladeshi labourers.

Social Integration Policies

The implementation of social policy along with its integration with economic legislation is expected to be supportive of the promotion of social stability, political unity and equality despite complications. In Malaysia, the presence of the Malaysia My Second Home or MM2H visa policy has enabled migrated labourers to stay in the country after their retirement for employment contracts. However, the rights and status under this policy are often mistakenly claimed by different stakeholder groups (Koh, 2024). This policy consists of two distinct versions, which are mainly dedicated to two different parts of Malaysia, namely Sarawak and West Malaysia. This visa regulation can also be counted as a social integration policy due to its efficiency in establishing integration with foreign workers aiming to stay within the nation.

HYPOTHESIS

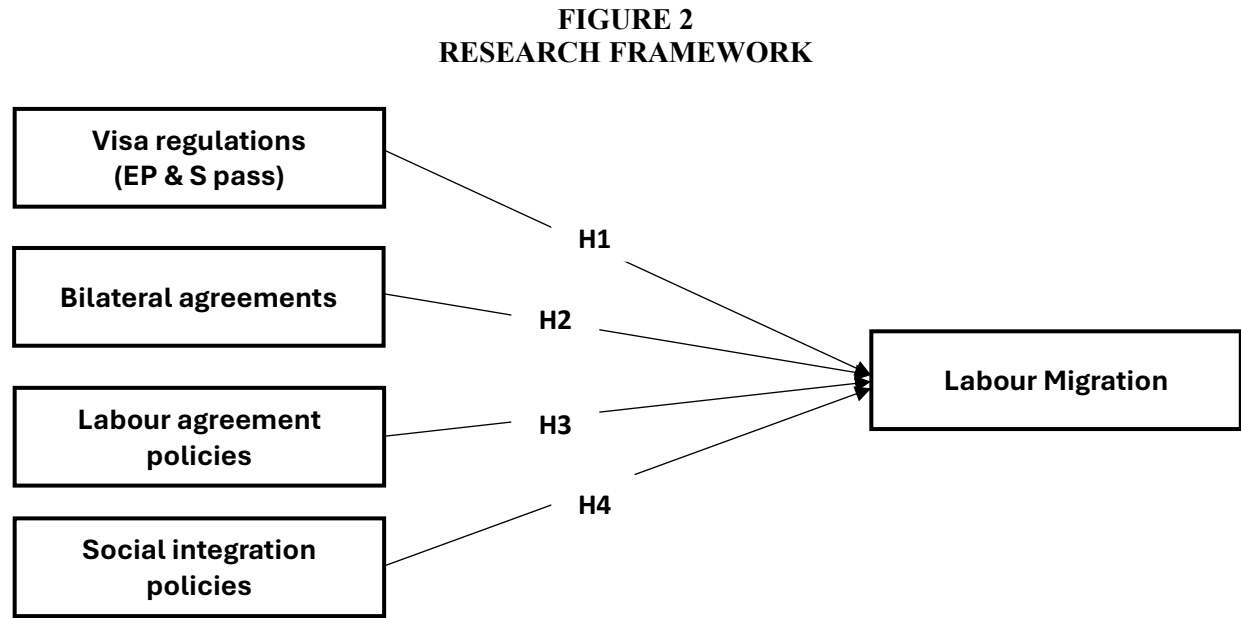
***H1:** Visa regulations (EP & S pass) directly impact the labour migration*

***H2:** Bilateral agreements have a positive impact on labour migration*

***H3:** Labour agreement policies also impact Bangladeshi labour migration*

***H4:** Social integration policies directly affect labour migration in Malaysia*

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK



Source: Self-developed

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

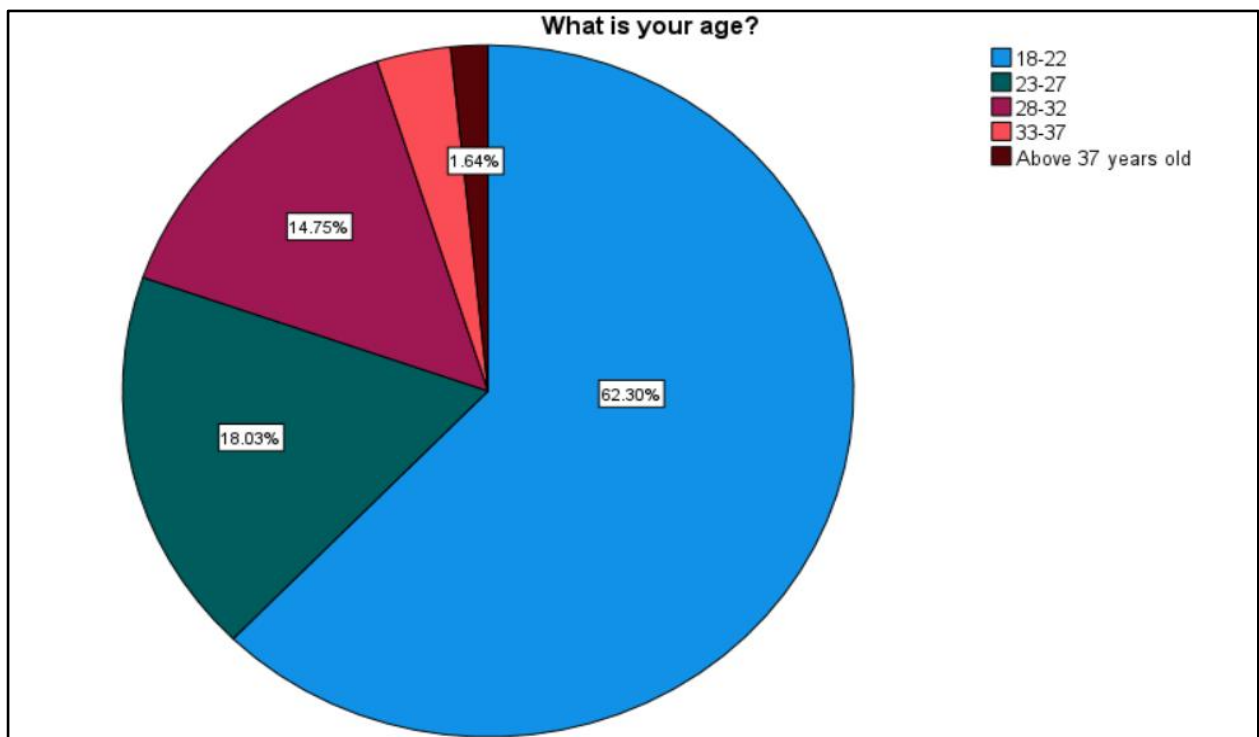
The selection of a suitable methodological approach is necessary for carrying out scientific studies, whereas the methods and techniques are divided as per the nature and type of data required for the study. The present study has emphasised the exploration and investigation of the role played by Malaysian government policies relating to the migration of Bangladeshi workers. The data collection process is observed to be an imperative and crucially significant process in research (Mazhar, Anjum, Anwar & Khan, 2021). By taking into consideration the research purposes, it is decided that the collection of primary data would be incredibly beneficial and practical for evaluating the current role and significance of Malaysian government policies relating to migration.

Other than that, an online survey has been conducted via Google Forms, through a structured questionnaire. Facilitating a simple random sampling method has helped in the participant selection process, while the main research population has been observed to be the Bangladeshi labourers who migrated to Malaysia. A total of 21 questions were generated based on the research context, while around 61 participants responded to the survey process. Afterwards, the collected data was structured and interpreted by utilising the IBM SPSS software to conduct statistical analysis. Facilitating this specific statistical tool has enabled access to correlation and coefficient analysis, reliability analysis and frequency analysis.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Demographic Study

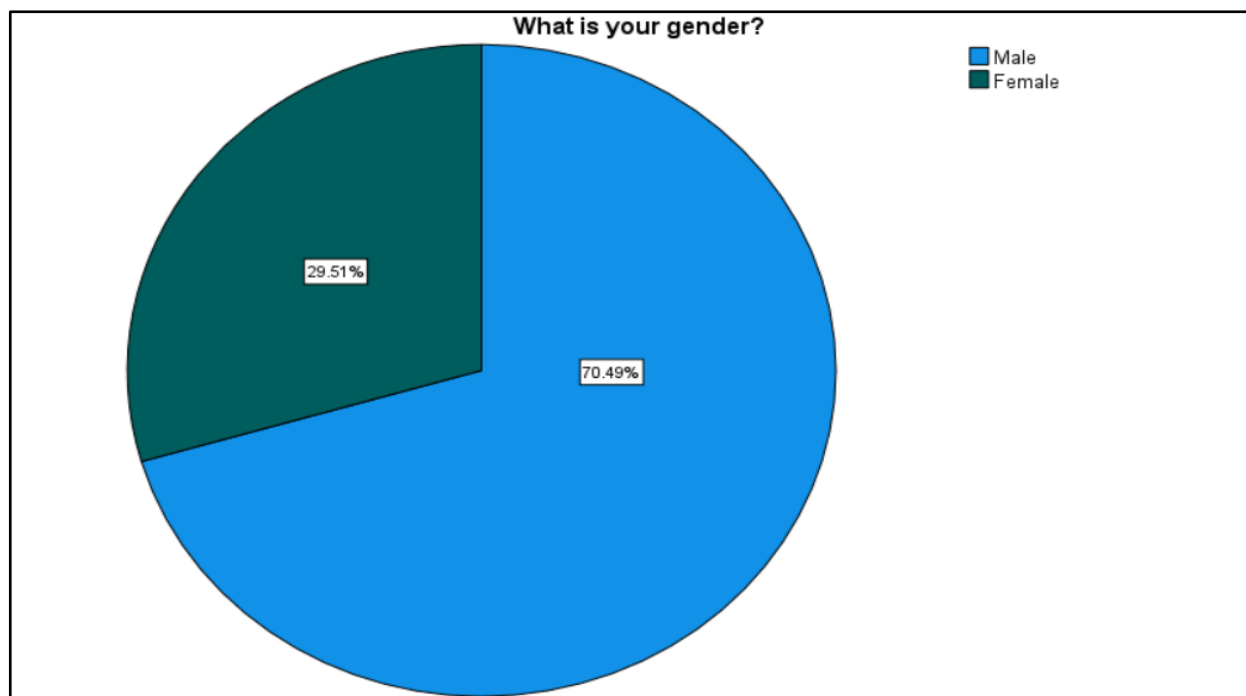
**FIGURE 3
AGE GROUP**



Source: IBM SPSS

Based on the gained answers from the respondents, the majority of the participants are identified to belong to the age group 18-22 years. Despite the significant participation of different age groups, the most impactful age group among migrated labourers is observed to be this particular one.

FIGURE 4
GENDER

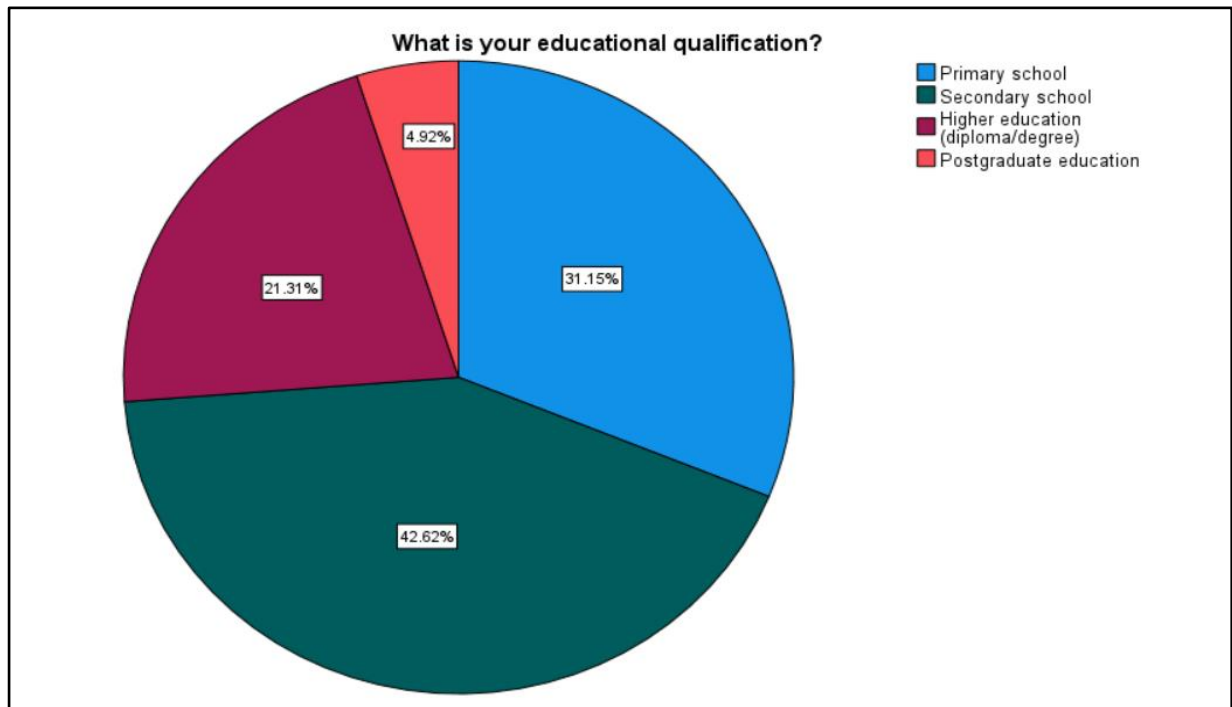


Source: IBM SPSS

The survey results indicate that more than 70% of the total respondents are male with an insignificant rate of female respondents. These aspects reflect that many male labourers migrated from Bangladesh to Malaysia, while the number of female workers is relatively low. The presence of awareness and knowledge regarding the government Malaysian government policies, labour agreements and visa regulations is comparatively high among males.

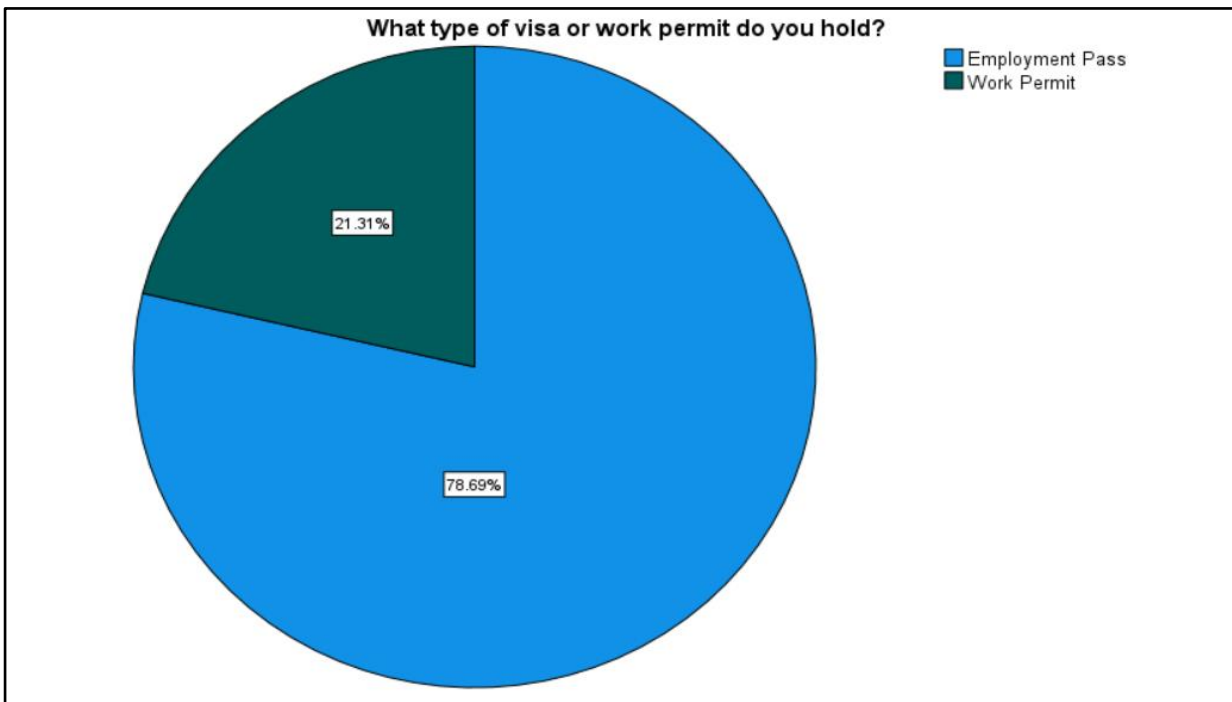
One of the most significant factors relating to labour migration is educational qualification and knowledge and as per the opinions of the respondents, nearly 43% of them have completed secondary education. Other than that, more than 31% of the total respondents are observed to have only primary education with a significant rate of approximately 21% of the participants with higher education. By taking into consideration these aspects, the majority of labourers who migrated from Bangladesh to Malaysia tend to have secondary education, reflecting a presence of minimal education capability. Due to this situation, these people are accustomed to getting involved with jobs having low-skill requirements and low payment.

FIGURE 5
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS



Source: IBM SPSS

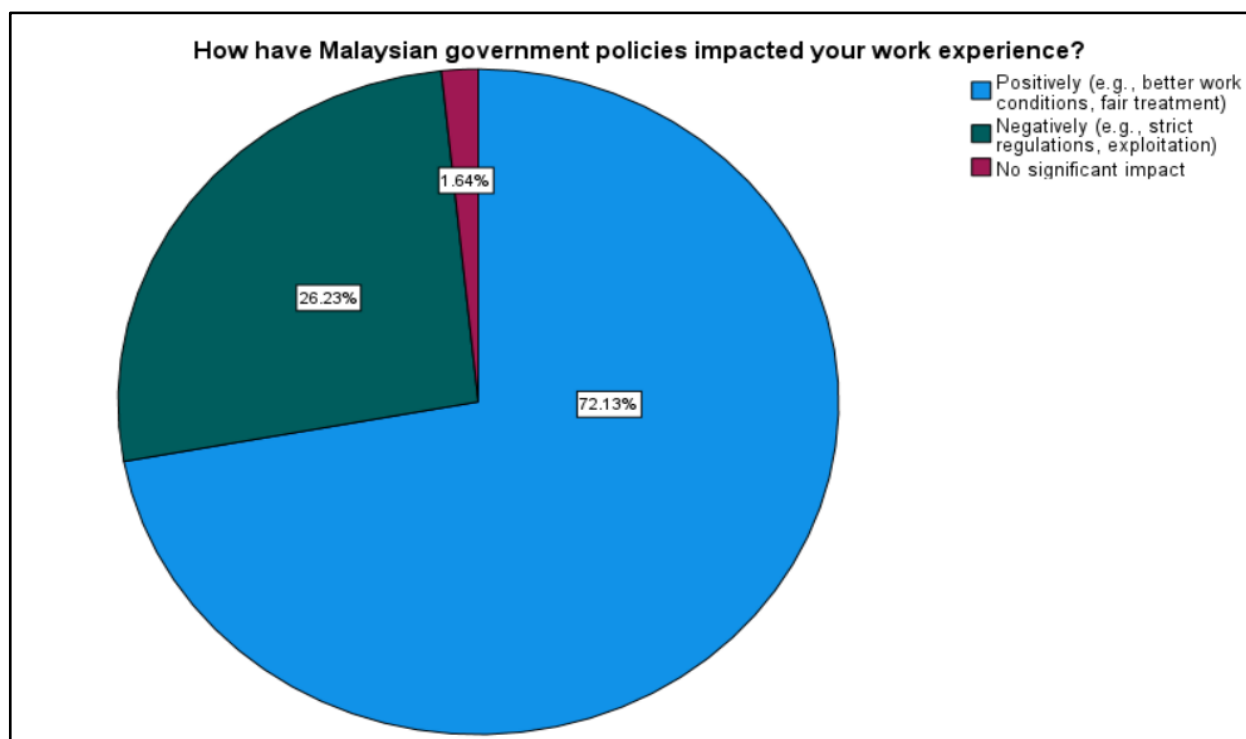
FIGURE 6
TYPE OF VISA OR WORK PERMIT HELD BY RESPONDENTS



Source: IBM SPSS

There is a vast range of visa and work permits available for migrated labourers in Malaysia, however, the policies can vary from nation to nation. Due to this factor, approximately 78% of the survey respondents have revealed that they hold an employee pass or EP, followed by more than 21% of the respondents with work permits. The survey respondents are expected to represent the entire research population, due to which, it requires to be mentioned that a high percentage of Bangladeshi labourers who migrated to Malaysia have secondary education qualifications.

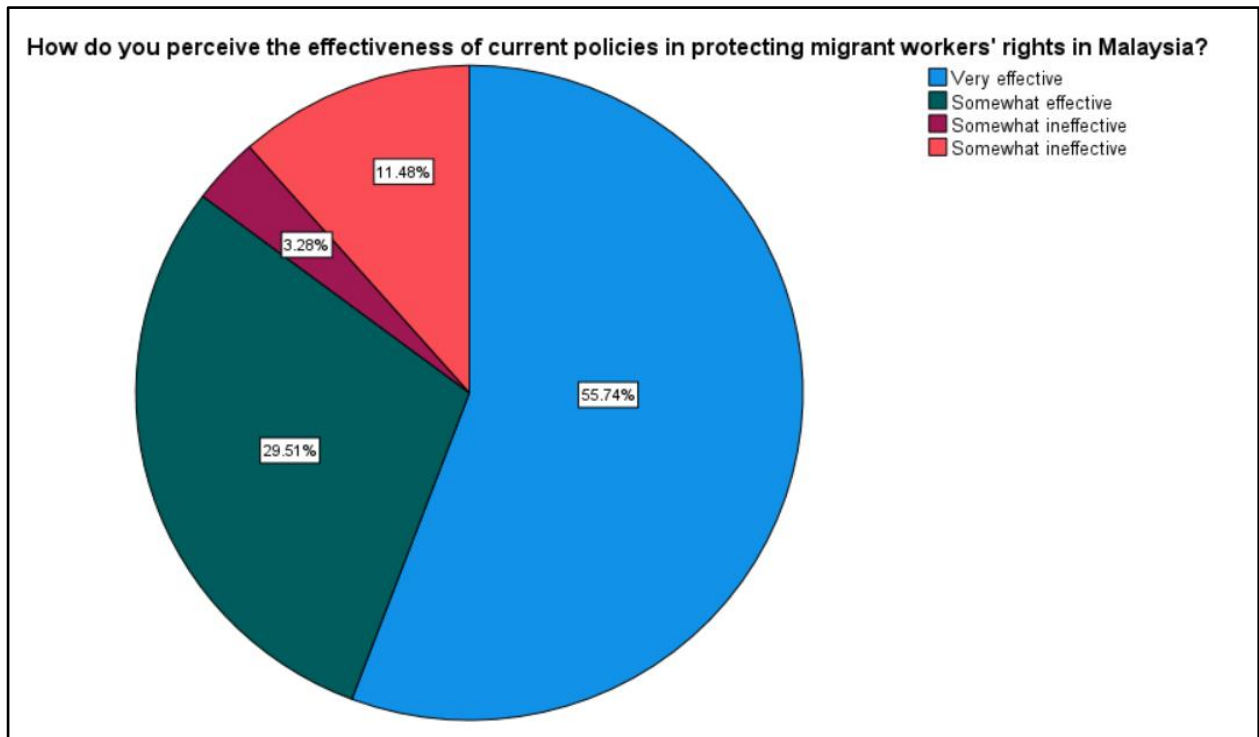
FIGURE 7
IMPACT OF MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON WORK EXPERIENCE



Source: IBM SPSS

Government policies are observed to play a significantly huge role in labour migration along with encouraging foreign workers to migrate to specific countries. Indeed, the Malaysian government has also implemented a diverse range of policies and legislative norms. As revealed by the survey respondents, these policies tend to have an incrementally positive effect on enhancing the work experience of Bangladeshi migrated workers. Other than that, more than 26% of the survey respondents have also argued about a critically negative impact of the Malaysian government policies associated with labour migration. Henceforth, the current labour migration policies and norms are observed to be practically beneficial for Bangladeshi workers who have migrated to Malaysia.

FIGURE 8
EFFECTIVENESS OF CURRENT POLICIES IN PROTECTING MIGRANT WORKERS' RIGHTS IN MALAYSIA



Source: IBM SPSS

Ensuring the protection of the rights and experience of migrated workers is among the most critical requirements, which is observed to hold an exponential interconnection with labour migration agreements. A diverse range of policies and legislations are observed to be enacted by the Malaysian government regarding labour migration with a specific focus on Bangladeshi workers. According to the data shared by the survey participants, these policies can be considered as “*very effective*”. More than 55% of the total survey respondents have shared positive perceptions relating to the current migration and employment policies in Malaysia, whereas around 11% of the participants have argued about their inefficiency regarding the protection of workers’ rights.

FIGURE 9
FREQUENCY ANALYSIS

		Statistics																				
		What is your age?	What is your gender?	What is your educational qualification?	What type of visa or work permit do you hold?	How have Malaysian government policies impacted your work experience?	How do you perceive the effectiveness of current policies in protecting migrant workers' rights in Malaysia?	The Bangladeshi government's policies make it easier to migrate to Malaysia for work	The process of obtaining a work permit in Malaysia is straightforward and fair	Migrant workers in Malaysia are provided with adequate safety measures in their workplaces	The conditions imposed by the Employment Pass (EP) are reasonable and do not overly restrict my employment	The criteria for obtaining an Employment Pass (EP) are fair and reasonable	The EP Pass provides adequate job flexibility and opportunities in Malaysia	Government to government (G2G) agreements have improved the protection of Bangladeshi workers' rights in Malaysia	The bilateral agreements have led to better job placement and employment conditions for Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia	The G2G agreements have facilitated better coordination between Bangladesh and Malaysia regarding labor migration	The MoUs between Bangladesh and Malaysia have successfully improved working conditions for Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia	The terms of the labor agreements and MoUs between Bangladesh and Malaysia are adequate for addressing issues faced by employers and migrant workers	Support services provided under the labor agreements and MoUs are adequate for Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia	The MCH program is inclusive and accommodates the diverse needs of expatriates from different countries	Cultural programs in Malaysia effectively promote understanding and cooperation among different ethnic communities	Cultural community programs in Malaysia are inclusive and provide equal opportunities for migrants across different communities
N	Valid	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		1.64	1.30	3.00	1.21	1.30	1.70	1.84	1.77	1.52	1.64	1.87	2.03	1.89	1.85	1.62	1.75	1.69	1.77	1.69	1.82	1.82
Median		1.00	1.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Mode		1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Std. Deviation		.967	.460	.856	.413	.495	.989	1.001	1.071	.766	.895	.974	1.251	1.112	1.046	.879	1.011	.896	.990	.904	.958	1.029
Variance		.934	.211	.733	.170	.245	.978	1.001	1.146	.587	.801	.949	1.566	1.237	1.095	.772	1.022	.795	.980	.818	.917	1.059
Skewness		1.478	.921	.484	1.437	1.341	1.381	1.324	1.742	2.214	1.799	1.813	1.150	1.662	1.479	1.887	1.620	1.558	1.550	1.787	1.317	1.240
Std. Error of Skewness		.306	.306	.306	.306	.306	.306	.306	.306	.306	.306	.306	.306	.306	.306	.306	.306	.306	.306	.306	.306	.306
Kurtosis		1.634	-1.191	-.416	.885	.758	.856	3.487	2.674	7.112	3.545	2.763	.213	2.313	1.770	4.101	2.455	2.806	1.973	3.489	1.546	.880
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.604	.604	.604	.604	.604	.604	.604	.604	.604	.604	.604	.604	.604	.604	.604	.604	.604	.604	.604	.604	.604

Source: IBM SPSS

The frequency analysis mainly involves providing a summary of the basic results of different observations that have been carried out through statistical analysis. As per the above image of frequency analysis, the question regarding the impact of S pass toward job flexibility and opportunity is observed to have a mean value of 2.03, with a Std. Deviation value of 1.251. Other than that, the question relating to Bangladeshi government policy for providing support to labour migration is observed to hold a Std. Deviation value of 1.001. These mean and Std values are mainly clustered in different conditions, while the question investigating the Bangladeshi government's support for migration is observed to have a significant mean value.

Correlation Analysis

FIGURE 10
CORRELATION ANALYSIS

		Correlations				
		Labour Migration	Visa Regulations	Bilateral agreements	Labour agreement policies	Social integration policies
Labour Migration	Pearson Correlation	1	.322*	.215	.440**	.372**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.011	.095	.000	.003
	N	61	61	61	61	61
Visa Regulations	Pearson Correlation	.322*	1	.601**	.424**	.445**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011		.000	.001	.000
	N	61	61	61	61	61
Bilateral agreements	Pearson Correlation	.215	.601**	1	.360**	.312*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.095	.000		.004	.014
	N	61	61	61	61	61
Labour agreement policies	Pearson Correlation	.440**	.424**	.360**	1	.443**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.004		.000
	N	61	61	61	61	61
Social integration policies	Pearson Correlation	.372**	.445**	.312*	.443**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.000	.014	.000	
	N	61	61	61	61	61
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

Source: IBM SPSS

The correlation analysis presents the present interconnections between different variables associated with the research context. Based on the above table, none of the independent variables, namely visa regulations, bilateral regulations, labour agreement policies and social integration, does not hold an outstanding correlation value with the dependent variable, which is labour migration. Rather than that, each of the variables is observed to hold a moderate correlation with the dependent variable in this research.

Regression and Coefficient Analysis

FIGURE 11
REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
1	.492 ^a	.242	.187	.965	.242	F Change	df1	df2	
						4.461	4	56	.003
a. Predictors: (Constant), Visa Regulations, Bilateral agreements, Labour agreement policies, Social integration policies									

Source: IBM SPSS

Another significant statistical analysis tool is regression analysis, which supports analysing the connection between one or more variables. This analysis is mainly interpreted based on the R-value, which is required to be >1 , while the R-value gained in the current study is .492, which cannot be considered to be a statistically significant value. However, a key reason for this situation is a small sample has been studied in this research, which has somewhat failed to represent the entire research population. Therefore, the correlation between the variables of the present research cannot be justified based on the used sample.

FIGURE 12
ANOVA

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	16.621	4	4.155	4.461	.003 ^b
	Residual	52.166	56	.932		
	Total	68.787	60			
a. Dependent Variable: Labour Migration						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Visa Regulations, Bilateral agreements, Labour agreement policies, Social integration policies						

Source: IBM SPSS

The above image has presented the result of another significant statistical analysis, ANOVA. A p-value $<.5$ is considered to be significant and a value of .003 can be defined as statistically significant based on this.

FIGURE 13
COEFFICIENT ANALYSIS

Coefficients^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.612	.323		1.897	.063
	Visa Regulations	.136	.173	.124	.789	.434
	Bilateral agreements	-.030	.142	-.031	-.210	.834
	Labour agreement policies	.334	.145	.315	2.310	.025
	Social integration policies	.221	.162	.187	1.367	.177
a. Dependent Variable: Labour Migration						

Source: IBM SPSS

The significant value of labour agreement policies is observed as .025, which can be stated to hold a statistically significant relation with labour migration in Malaysia. Besides this, other variables, which include bilateral agreements, social integration policies and visa regulations, are observed to have a moderate impact on labour migration in Malaysia.

DISCUSSION

The analysis and interpretation of primary data have provided incredible insights associated with the role of the independent variables towards labour migration in Malaysia through illustrating the results of a vast range of statistical methods. The increased pressure of allowing migration of low-skilled Bangladeshi labourers is quite high for Malaysia, while the Bangladeshi government is observed to implement various migration-friendly policies and practices. Bangladesh is observed to consist of interconnection with low-skilled employment and engaging with critically vulnerable labour conditions (Haq, Alam, Ayub & Farzana, 2020). Besides this, the current policies are observed to have beneficial implications towards labour rights and the work experience of migrated workers. As mentioned by Hamzah, Sarifin, Aziz & Abdullah (2020), Bangladesh is identified to be the second largest exporter of semi-skilled and low-skilled workers in Malaysia. As per the primary data interpretation, the Malaysian government has implemented incredibly innovative and supportive policies and legislative norms, which include the G2G program, MoU, minimum wage policies and visa policies.

During the survey, respondents disclosed their low education capabilities and qualifications, indicating one of the common skill-related issues between Bangladesh and Malaysia. It is important to understand that the current policies associated with labour migration and employment of foreign workers is most likely to be fair and viable as per the data shared by the survey participants. As highlighted by Loganathan, Chan & Pocock (2020), the Malaysian government has implemented incrementally adequate policies regarding social protection and healthcare financing of migrant labourers in the country. These come under the main policies and related factors that are eventually protecting the rights of migrant workers in Malaysia. It is observed that labour agreement policies possess the most outstanding role toward labour migration in Malaysia. Indeed, the survey results have disclosed a relatively significant effect of G2G programs regarding the improvement of labour conditions and rights of Bangladeshi workers who have migrated to Malaysia.

CONCLUSION

In concluding remarks, this research has presented incredibly relevant insights associated with the effects of government policies on Bangladeshi migrated workers in Malaysia. Facilitating a primary method for information gathering has enabled the conduction of extensive research creating advantages for the identification of key factors impacting the migration of Bangladeshi labourers in Malaysia. The Malaysian government has enacted a vast range of legislative norms practices and policies for ensuring sustainable conditions for migrated foreign workers. However, in the case of Bangladeshi workers, there is a subtle restriction regarding the availability of work permits and visa regulations as Bangladeshi workers are mostly provided with temporary work permits. Despite this aspect, the survey respondents have revealed using employment pass or EP for their migration in Malaysia. Thereafter, it can be mentioned there is a gradual need for upgrading the foreign labour migration policies and legislative norms

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study, an urgent need for policy upgradation and improvements have been identified to ensure Bangladesh's migrant labourers in Malaysia are in better situations. In order to do so, arranging a different Ministry department for observation, controlling, and managing the policies present is highly recommended for implementing a sustainable situation among Bangladeshi migrant labourers in Malaysia. The Malaysian government is recommended to establish an outstanding focus on the labour market along with employment conditions and other aspects. Indeed, the rising concerns about labour exploitation and other issues needs to be eliminated for gaining accessibility to economic development, social equality and political stability through labour migration. Keeping a better focus on the employment conditions of migrated Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia is recommended and this practice is also expected to boost the internal relationship between Bangladesh and Malaysian governments. Thereafter, the proposed recommendations are expected to be beneficial and supportive for the desired upgradation of Bangladeshi labour migration in Malaysia.

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