
The Influence of Motivation and Social Support on The Decision to Work Abroad

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of motivation and social support on the decision to work abroad among Generation Z in Pasir Sakti District, East Lampung Regency. The increasing number of Generation Z choosing to work abroad indicates the presence of internal and external factors that affect work decision-making. This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to 115 Generation Z respondents currently working abroad. The data analysis techniques used include descriptive statistical analysis and multiple linear regression analysis, with hypothesis testing through t-tests, F-tests, and the coefficient of determination. The results of the study show that motivation has a positive and significant effect on the decision to work abroad. Social support is also proven to have a positive and significant effect on the decision to work abroad. Simultaneously, motivation and social support have a significant effect on Generation Z's decision to work abroad, with motivation being the most dominant variable. These findings indicate that the decision to work abroad is influenced not only by economic factors but also by internal drives and social environmental support. This research provides important implications for local governments and relevant stakeholders in designing accompaniment policies and strengthening human resources so that labor migration is carried out consciously, safely, and sustainably.



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1. INTRODUCTION

International labor mobility is a phenomenon that continues to grow alongside globalization and the openness of labor markets across countries. Working abroad is no longer dominated by adult age groups, but is increasingly popular among Generation Z, the generation born between 1997 and 2012

who are in the early to peak stages of their productive years. Generation Z is known for being adaptive to change, having a strong future orientation, and tending to seek job opportunities that not only provide economic rewards but also experiences and personal development (Putri, 2025).

This phenomenon is also seen in Pasir Sakti District, East Lampung Regency, where the number of Generation Z working abroad shows an increasing trend from year to year. This condition is influenced by the limited formal employment opportunities in the area, relatively low wages, and the lack of career development opportunities in the local sector. From the perspective of labor migration, this condition can be understood through the push and pull theory, where push factors from the place of origin and pull factors from the destination country simultaneously shape individuals' decisions to migrate for work (Lee, 1966).

The decision to work abroad is the result of a complex decision-making process and is not based solely on economic considerations. Motivation as an internal factor plays an important role in encouraging individuals to make risky and challenging work decisions. Motivation reflects a psychological drive related to the needs for autonomy, competence, and social connectedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Individuals with strong motivation tend to have courage, clarity of purpose, and mental preparedness to face work challenges, including working abroad. Research by Lu'lu et al. (2020) proves that motivation has a significant influence on the decision to work abroad, where the higher an individual's motivation, the greater their tendency to choose to become a migrant worker.

Social support is an external factor that also influences the decision to work abroad. Social support includes emotional, informational, and instrumental support received by individuals from family, friends, or close acquaintances (House, 1981; Zimet et al., 1988). Social support functions as a buffering system that helps individuals reduce psychological stress and increase a sense of security when facing major life decisions (Sarafino & Smith, 2011). In the context of labor migration, family support and the social environment have been shown to play an important role in strengthening individuals' preparedness and resilience. Research by Rosyidah et al. (2023) indicates that family support has a strong contribution to the resilience of migrant worker families, highlighting the importance of the social environment in the sustainability of labor migration.

The decision to work abroad can also be explained through the Theory of Planned Behavior, which states that an individual's behavior is determined by intention, which is influenced by attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). Within this framework, motivation is closely related to attitudes and perceived behavioral control, while social support correlates with subjective norms. This means that Generation Z's decision to work abroad is shaped by a combination of internal drives and social pressures or support from their surrounding environment.

Although various studies have examined the factors influencing the decision to work abroad, most have still focused on migrant workers in general or previous generations, and have not specifically explored Generation Z in rural areas with certain socioeconomic characteristics. Furthermore, previous research tends to study motivation and social support separately. Therefore, the novelty of this study lies in the simultaneous examination of the influence of motivation and social support on the decision to work abroad among Generation Z in Pasir Sakti District, East Lampung Regency, emphasizing psychological and social dynamics during the transition to independence and integrating Self-Determination Theory into a single empirical model. It is expected that this can fill the gap in the literature and provide practical contributions for formulating more targeted labor migration assistance policies.

Literature Review

The research variables consist of motivation (X_1), social support (X_2), and the decision to work abroad (Y). Motivation is measured based on the need for autonomy, competence, and social connectedness. Social support is measured through emotional, informational, and instrumental support. The decision to work abroad is measured by the level of confidence, readiness, and determination of respondents in making work decisions.

Motivation

Motivation is the internal and external drive that influences individuals in determining the direction, intensity, and persistence of behavior to achieve specific goals (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In the context of employment, motivation plays an important role in shaping work decisions, including the decision to work abroad. Individuals with high motivation are more likely to take risky work decisions that offer opportunities for personal and economic development. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) explains that motivation is influenced by the fulfillment of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Autonomy reflects an individual's freedom in making work choices, competence relates to the belief in one's ability to face work challenges, while relatedness reflects the desire to gain recognition and meaningful social connections. Fulfilling these three needs can increase intrinsic motivation and strengthen an individual's decision to choose to work abroad. Previous research shows that motivation has a significant influence on the decision to work abroad. Syaifulloh et al. (2020) found that motivation is a dominant factor driving individuals to work as migrant workers. In addition to economic factors, non-material motivations such as the desire to gain international experience and independence also strengthen the decision to work abroad, especially among younger age groups.

Social Support

Social support is defined as an individual's perception of emotional, informational, and instrumental help received from his or her social environment, such as family, friends, and close people (Zimet et al., 1988). Social support acts as a psychological resource that can increase an individual's sense of security, confidence, and readiness to face the pressures and risks that accompany major decisions in life, including the decision to work abroad. House (1981) classified social support into several forms, namely emotional support, instrumental support, informational support, and appraisal support. In the context of labor migration, emotional support comes in the form of family blessings and moral encouragement, informational support includes information about procedures and job opportunities, and instrumental support involves financial or logistical assistance, all of which are important factors influencing individual decisions. Various studies indicate that social support significantly influences decisions and preparedness to work abroad. Rosyidah et al. (2023) found that family support contributes greatly to the psychological resilience of migrant workers. In addition, Effendi et al. (2025) showed that social support is positively related to the work readiness of Generation Z. This suggests that the stronger the social support an individual feels, the greater their tendency to make the decision to work abroad.

The Decision to Work Abroad

The decision to work abroad is the result of an individual's cognitive and social process in determining cross-country job choices, involving personal, social, and environmental considerations. This decision is not only influenced by economic factors but also by attitudes, social norms, and the individual's perception of their ability to carry out the decision. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) explains that behavioral decisions or intentions are influenced by three main components: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). Attitude reflects an individual's assessment of the benefits of working abroad, subjective norms relate to social

support or pressure from the surrounding environment, while perceived behavioral control represents an individual's belief in their ability to overcome obstacles and meet the requirements of working abroad. In addition to TPB, the Push-Pull theory also explains the decision to migrate for work through push factors from the origin area and pull factors from the destination country (Lee, 1966). However, for Generation Z, the decision to work abroad is not only driven by structural factors but also by intrinsic motivation and social support that shape beliefs and courage in making such decisions. Therefore, the decision to work abroad is viewed as the result of the interaction between internal motivation and external social support.

2. METHOD

Research Design

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design. The quantitative approach was chosen because this study aims to empirically test the influence of motivation and social support variables on the decision to work abroad among Generation Z through numerical measurement and statistical analysis. The explanatory design is used to explain the causal relationships between variables based on previously formulated hypotheses.

Participants/Sample Selection and Data Sources

The population in this study is all Generation Z in Pasir Sakti District, East Lampung Regency, who work abroad. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling with the criteria that respondents are Generation Z and are currently or have previously worked abroad.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} \quad (1)$$

$$n = \frac{162}{1 + 162(0,5)^2} = 115,3 \text{ employee}$$

Based on these calculations, the sample size can be rounded to 115 respondents. Thus, the sample for this study consists of 115 Generation Z Indonesian migrant workers from Pasir Sakti District who are currently working abroad.

Data Analysis/Estimating Model/Variable Measurement

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Inferential statistics were used to test the research hypotheses with multiple linear regression analysis. The t-test was used to determine partial effects, the F-test for simultaneous effects, and the coefficient of determination to determine the contribution of independent variables to the dependent variable.

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1.X_1 + \beta_2.X_2 + \epsilon$$

Description:

Y = The decision to work abroad

α = constant

β_1 = Regression coefficient X1

β_2 = Regression coefficient X2

X₁ = Motivation

X_2 = Social support

et = error term

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents Based on Destination Country for Work

Country	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Japan	66	57.4	57.4	57.4
South Korea	6	5.2	5.2	62.6
Malaysia	5	4.3	4.3	67.0
Qatar	1	.9	.9	68.7
Singapore	1	.9	.9	69.6
Taiwan	32	27.8	27.8	96.5
Turkey	4	3.5	3.5	100.0
Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the respondents' most dominant work destination country is Japan, with a percentage of 57.4%, followed by Taiwan at 27.8%. This condition indicates that respondents tend to choose destination countries that have high labor demand, relatively clear placement systems, and more stable income opportunities compared to other countries.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents Based on Last Education

Education	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Elementary School/Equivalent	3	2.6	2.6	29.6
Junior High School/Equivalent	2	1.7	1.7	100.0
Senior High School/Vocational High School/Equivalent	79	68.7	68.7	98.3
Diploma II/D2	1	.9	.9	.9
Diploma III/D3	3	2.6	2.6	3.5
Bachelor's Degree/Undergraduate/S1	27	23.5	23.5	27.0
Total	115	100.0	100.0	

The educational level of respondents is dominated by high school/vocational school or equivalent graduates at 68.7%, followed by bachelor's degree (S1) graduates at 23.5%. This indicates that job opportunities abroad are quite open for individuals with a secondary education background, although higher education graduates also play a significant role.

The validity test results show that all indicators in the motivation variable (X_1), social support (X_2), and the decision to work abroad (Y). This means that the instrument used has a good level of internal consistency and is capable of providing stable measurement results when applied under the same conditions.

The results of the descriptive statistical analysis indicate that respondents' motivation falls into the high category, suggesting that Generation Z has a strong internal drive to work abroad, in terms of

independence, skill development, and social connections. Furthermore, social support is also in the high category, particularly support from family and close ones, which reinforces respondents' confidence in making decisions to work abroad. Meanwhile, the variable of the decision to work abroad shows a positive tendency, reflecting supportive attitudes, strong subjective norms, and good perceived behavioral control regarding that decision.

Table 3. Multiple Linear Regression Test Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	13.243	2.486		5.326	.000
Motivation (X ₁)	.309	.056	.444	5.537	.000
Social support (X ₂)	.188	.046	.325	4.044	.000

The results of the multiple linear regression analysis indicate that the constant value of 13.243 suggests that the decision to work abroad remains at a basic level even without the influence of motivation and social support, which implies the existence of other factors outside the research model. The motivation variable (X₁) has a beta coefficient of 0.309, indicating a positive and the most dominant effect on the decision to work abroad, where any increase in motivation will significantly enhance the decision to work abroad. Meanwhile, social support (X₂) also has a positive effect with a beta coefficient of 0.188, although its influence is relatively smaller compared to motivation. These findings confirm that motivation is the main factor driving Generation Z's decision to work abroad, with social support serving as a supporting factor.

Table 4. t-Test Results

Variable	t-Count	t-Table	Sig.	α	Description
Motivation (X ₁) towards Work Decisions Abroad (Y)	5,537	1,658	.0,000	0,05	Significant
Social Support for Work Decisions Abroad (Y)	4,044	1,658	0,000	0,05	Significant

The t-test results indicate that the motivation variable (X₁) has a positive and significant effect on the decision to work abroad (Y), as shown tvalue of 5.537, which is greater than the table t-value of 1.658, with a significance level of $0.000 < 0.05$, thus supporting hypothesis H₁. In addition, the social support is also proven to have a positive and significant effect on the decision to work abroad, with a calculated t-value of 4.044, which is greater than the table t-value of 1.658, and a significance level of $0.000 < 0.05$, thus supporting hypothesis H₂. These findings confirm that both motivation and social support partially play an important role in encouraging Generation Z's decision to work abroad.

Table 5. F-Test Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
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Regression	695.400	2	347.700	43.854	.000 ^b
Residual	887.992	112	7.928		
Total	1583.391	114			

Based on the Ftest results, the calculated Fvalue is 43.854 with a significance value of $0.00 < 0.05$. Based on the calculation of degrees of freedom, with the sample size (n) = 115 and the number of variables (k) = 3, resulting in a table F value of 3.08 at a 0.05 significance level. Since it is known that the calculated F (43.854) > table F (3.08), it can be concluded that the variables of motivation and social support simultaneously have a significant effect on the decision to work abroad.

Table 6. Determinant Coefficient Test Results

Model	R	R Square (R ²)	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.663 ^a	.439	.429	2.816

Based on the analysis results, an R Square (R²) value of 0.439 was obtained. This indicates that 43.9% of the variation in the decision to work abroad can be explained by the variables of motivation and social support. Meanwhile, the remaining 56.1% is influenced by other factors outside the research model.

Discussion

The t-test results show that motivation has a positive and significant effect on the decision to work abroad, as indicated by a calculated tvalue of 5.537, which is greater than the table t-value of 1.658, with a significance of $0.000 < 0.05$ and a positive regression coefficient of 0.309. These findings indicate that any increase in motivation will enhance an individual's tendency to decide to work abroad. Motivation becomes an important factor in shaping an individual's belief and readiness to face international work challenges, in line with Self-Determination Theory, which asserts that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation drives individuals in decision-making to achieve goals and personal development. The results of this study are also consistent with previous research which states that motivation has a positive and significant effect on the decision to work abroad (Husniawati, 2017; Lu'lu et al., 2020), thereby confirming that motivation is a primary and stable determinant in international work decisions among Generation Z.

The ttest results indicate that social support has a positive and significant effect on the decision to work abroad, as evidenced by a t-value of 4.044, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.658, with a significance level of $0.000 < 0.05$, and a positive regression coefficient of 0.188. These findings suggest that an increase in social support will enhance an individual's tendency to decide to work abroad, although the magnitude of the effect is smaller compared to motivation. Social support from family, friends, and close individuals plays a role in boosting a sense of security, self-confidence, and psychological readiness of the individual. The results of this study are also in line with previous research which emphasizes that social support contributes significantly in the context of labor migration, particularly in reducing risk perception and enhancing individuals' psychological readiness (Rosyidah et al., 2023), thereby reinforcing the role of social support as an important factor in the decision to work abroad.

The F-test results show that motivation and social support simultaneously have a significant effect on the decision to work abroad, as indicated by an F-value of 43.854, which is greater than the F-table value of 3.08, with a significance of $0.000 < 0.05$. The coefficient of determination (R Square) value of 0.439 indicates that 43.9% of the variation in the decision to work abroad can be explained by these two variables, while the remaining portion is influenced by other factors outside the research

model. These findings are in line with the Theory of Planned Behavior, where motivation reflects an individual's attitude toward behavior, while social support reflects subjective norms that together shape intentions and beliefs in decision-making. Thus, the combination of strong motivation and positive social support reinforces Generation Z's determination to work abroad, while also affirming that the decision to work is the result of a synergy between internal and external factors.

4. CONCLUSION

The study's findings reveal that motivation and social support are significant determinants that positively shape Generation Z's decision to pursue employment abroad. Partially, motivation is proven to have a positive and significant impact on the decision to work abroad, indicating that an individual's internal drive, such as the desire to improve economic welfare, gain international work experience, and develop competencies, is a key factor in making this decision. Social support also has a positive and significant effect, affirming that support from family, friends, and the social environment plays an important role in strengthening an individual's confidence and psychological readiness.

Simultaneously, motivation and social support have been shown to significantly influence the decision to work abroad, with the model's explanatory power at 43.9%. These findings indicate that the decision to work abroad is the result of a synergy between internal and external factors. This research aligns, which assert that an individual's intentions and decisions are influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and motivational drives. Therefore, this study provides empirical evidence that strengthening individual motivation, supported by a positive social environment, is key in shaping the decision to work abroad for Generation Z.

Based on the research results, Generation Z is expected to improve self-motivation and competency readiness before deciding to work abroad, with positive support from family and the social environment. The government and related institutions are advised to strengthen training and mentoring programs for prospective migrant workers, while future researchers can develop the study by adding other variables and expanding the scope of respondents.

Theoretical and Contextual Contributions

This study provides both theoretical and contextual contributions to the literature on international labor migration and work decision-making among young workers. From a theoretical perspective, this research extends the application of Self-Determination Theory and the Theory of Planned Behavior by empirically integrating motivation and social support within a single explanatory model to explain the decision to work abroad. While previous studies have often examined these factors separately or focused predominantly on economic determinants, this study demonstrates that internal psychological motivation and external social support jointly shape Generation Z's work decisions. The findings reinforce the role of motivation as a dominant factor while confirming social support as a critical social mechanism that strengthens subjective norms and perceived behavioral control, thereby enriching the existing theoretical understanding of non-economic drivers in labor migration decisions.

From a contextual perspective, this study contributes novel empirical evidence by focusing specifically on Generation Z in a rural area of Indonesia, namely Pasir Sakti District, East Lampung Regency, a context that has been underexplored in prior research. By highlighting the decision-making dynamics of Generation Z migrant workers, this research captures the unique socio-

psychological characteristics of young individuals transitioning into independence amid limited local employment opportunities. The results provide valuable insights for policymakers and stakeholders, suggesting that labor migration policies should not only address economic incentives but also emphasize motivational strengthening and family-based social support systems. Therefore, this study contributes to a more comprehensive and context-sensitive understanding of labor migration, supporting the development of safer, more sustainable, and psychologically informed migration policies.

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