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**PURSUING HIGHER EDUCATION CAREERS AND THE PROCESS OF  
MIGRATION AMONG INDONESIAN FEMALE MIGRANT WORKERS IN  
TAIWAN**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Remittance, labor migration and the significance of the female role in the process of labor migration have recently become entrenched in many developing countries, such as Indonesia. The influential role these female migrant workers play in supporting their own families and in their self-fulfillment is of significance and worthy of being fully expounded and discussed. As breadwinners, these female migrant workers strive to pursue higher education by working their way through college. Qualitative in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were used to obtain five Indonesian female migrant workers' opinion and experiences about their experience of being a worker and a student in Taiwan. The data in this study were analyzed and evaluated with thematic analysis. This study describes the factors which cause the Indonesian female workers to become migrant workers in Taiwan. This includes getting high-paid jobs, shouldering the responsibility for supporting their own families, and pursuing self-fulfillment overseas. Besides, this study has investigated the difficulties and challenges that female Indonesian migrant workers had encountered while working and studying at the same time. On the whole, as caregivers, most of them often fail to have a flexible schedule to study due to the*

*temporary jobs assigned by their employers. Also, some employers are unwilling to allow them to pursue higher education for fear that they would not concentrate on their own work. Above all, it is these female migrant workers that can define what their lives truly mean as migrant workers on their own, and that can align their talents and ambitions with their pursuits of higher education. This study provides a new exploration of how the female migrant workers' gained a sense of self-fulfillment by pursuing higher education with working and studying at the same time. Facing a variety of challenges and hindrances, their persistence and perseverance can be further examined for those who are interested in studying this field deeper.*

**Keywords:** Female migrant workers, higher education, Indonesian migrant workers, labor migration, remittance

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of migration is common in some developing countries, including Indonesia. When discussing the patterns of labor migration, Vadlun (2010) stated that the phenomenon of migration among Indonesians occurs mostly among the female labor force. The main motive triggering both domestic and international migration is mainly based on economic reasons, especially for those who are married. Indonesia, as one of the largest sources of employment in the world, has sent numerous workers into the global market economy. Speaking of exporting and importing laborers, cooperation is definitely required to be established between Indonesia and other countries. Take Indonesia and Taiwan, for example. The two countries have cooperated in terms of sending and receiving (exporting and importing) laborers. Due to the fact that the living standard in Taiwan has become much higher, it has made low-end jobs unattractive to the locals accordingly, and become one of factors associated with the area of destination (Lee, 1966).

According to International Organization for Migration or IOM (2010), most Indonesian workers dispatched to other countries such as Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, Korea, Japan, and some countries in the Middle East, work as domestic workers, nannies, and caregivers. To a very large extent, these types of work are gendered, and mainly executed and implemented by women (Albin & Mantouvalou, 2011). Meanwhile, many Indonesian people have been forced

to migrate to big cities domestically or even go overseas as foreign laborers since the devaluation of Indonesian currency in 1997-1998 East Asian Economic crises (Waters, Saadah, & Pradhan, 2003). Poor financial situations and high unemployment rate are the major reasons why the workers are willing to or forced to become foreign workers in other countries. Accordingly, feminization of migration process has formed since women account for approximately up to 75% of migrant labors in total.

There is no doubt that becoming migrant workers is definitely not their main life goal. Since they have difficulty continuing their education, they have no choice but to become low-skilled migrant workers. As such, since working in formal sectors requires a graduate degree, they are unlikely to get good jobs in their homeland country. Worse still, most Indonesian workers are unskilled, and thereby it forces them to become migrant workers (Raharto, 2007).

Despite the fact that migrant workers are quite busy and tight up with tremendous housework or job missions, they have tried very hard to have good time management, striking the balance between working and studying. In most cases, they usually have less time to rest after work, let alone spend time on their studies. With this understanding, this research will focus on five Indonesian female domestic workers and students of Indonesia Open University, Taiwan Branch, deliberating upon their life stories. Initially, this study explores why and how the five female participants became migrant workers. In addition, we will discuss the remittances that they bring in to their families and their mother country as well in terms of economic impact. To sum up, this study attempts to explore the phenomenon of migrant workers that contributes to their involvement in higher education, inclusive of the characteristics of these complex experiences.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***2.1 The Theory of Migration***

Theory of migration was originally introduced by Ravenstein in 1885 (Grigg, 1977). It is widely used as a basis by other researchers (Lee, 1966). He claimed that the main motive of migration is derived from various kinds of economic reasons. Namely, those who choose to migrate have a strong desire to gain or even increase more income to support their families. As Hasmiiana (2004) argued, the reason of becoming migrant workers is due to the fact that they desperately need to strengthen their knowledge and proliferate their work experience. Moreover, they reckon that to migrate and work overseas is much better than being jobless in their homeland. Mantra, Kasto, and Keban (1999) also argued that some theories that reveal why people migrate are caused by the theory of needs and stress. Actually, everyone has

different needs, no matter what economic, social, or psychological reasons they are. Thus, migration, especially labor migration affected by structural factors (i.e. socio-demographic), can be seen as a phenomenon that people strive to have a comfortable life, a better geographical conditions than their homeland, as well as the characteristics of the community (Speare, 1975).

The concept theory of migration also demonstrated by Becker (2011), which used to determine a person's motivation to work overseas. Meanwhile, an individual is considered a social being responsible for his or her own choice. Generally speaking, individuals will bear the economic principles in mind, in an attempt to choose the best alternative and reduce risks. According to this theory, the migrants can be classified as rational individuals of deciding to work abroad. This is due to economic factors such as seeking jobs, increasing incomes, and some other non-economic reasons (e.g. social, educational, or psychological ones).

## ***2.2 Remittance and Indonesian Female Migrant Workers***

Indonesian female migrant workers are usually called *Pahlawan Devisa Negara* in Indonesian language, which means “foreign exchange hero.” It is because of their contribution to increase Indonesia’s GDP through their remittances that they are seen as heroines by their fellow citizens. The remittances they have sent back to Indonesia, for instance, help alleviate poverty, reduce unemployment rate, and add up foreign exchanges (Prihanto, 2014; Yunanto, 2011). With the above reasons and motivations, more and more Indonesians have a strong desire to work overseas accordingly, for they can earn much higher salaries in foreign countries (IOM, 2010). Most of them, especially the low-skilled female migrant workers, working as caregivers, nannies, housemaids, and laborers in factories, do not care about leaving their country and work solitarily overseas for years.

According to Awalia (2014), the remittances sent from Indonesian migrant workers have some benefits, such as offering tremendous financial support for their families in many ways. Besides, the remittances can also be used to financially support their children’s schooling fees, improve their economic situations, as well as help improve the rural areas’ development. Those workers are willing to send most of their wages back to their homeland, especially for their own families. Thus, remittances certainly play a very significant role in booming the staggering economy of Indonesia. Hence, the term *Pahlawan Devisa Negara* dedicates the fact that those Indonesian migrant workers have given the contribution to Indonesia financially by sacrificing themselves.

As for the motivation to send remittances back to Indonesia, it also indicates that most of the migrants are motivated by altruism. In practice, most migrant workers take on the

responsibility to support their families. On top of that, the strong bonds of “filial loyalty” are also the reason why migrant workers are willing to send remittances back to their own country. In other words, sending remittances can be thought of as cultural and social obligations to take care of their elderly parents and supporting their families. These traditional family values are commonly practiced in Indonesian society (Mahadi, Hussin, & Khoso, 2017).

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Participants, Data Collection and Data Analyses

Five students who took blended courses at Indonesia Open University in Taiwan were invited to participate in this study. They are Anik (Business Major), Bella (English Literature Major), Cintia (English Literature Major), Dina (Communication Major) and Ester (Communication Major). The names presented in this study are pseudonyms. All of the participants are Muslims and work as caregivers in different areas across Taiwan, paying their way through college. The following are their background information respectively: Anik from East Java, working in Hualien as a caregiver for three years, is single currently; Bella from East Java, working in Hsinchu as a caregiver for eight years, is single currently; Cintia from West Java, working in Taipei as a caregiver for three years, is divorced with one kid; Dina from West Java, working in Taipei as a caregivers for six years, is divorced with one kid; Ester from West Java, working in Taipei as a caregivers for five years, is married with one kid. The participants’ background is summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Participants’ background

No.	Name (Pseudonyms)	Age	Major	Marital Status	Hometown	Length of Working	Address in Taiwan
1	Anik	26	Business	Single	East Java	3 years	Hualien
2	Bella	25	English Literature	Single	East Java	8 years	Hsinchu
3	Cintia	32	English Literature	Divorced (1 kid)	West Java	3 years	Taipei
4	Dina	30	Communication	Divorced (1 kid)	West java	6 years	Taipei
5	Ester	29	Communication	Divorced (1 kid)	West Java	5 years	Taipei

This study used qualitative methodology in order to understand lives of people in terms of real conditions (Yin, 2011). Qualitative data in the form of in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) were collected in our study. The interview scheduled with potential participants was arranged ahead of the fieldwork, and all the participants were interviewed one-on-one, regarding their experiences of being migrant workers and students. Meanwhile, the length of the interviews ranges from 30 minutes to 40 minutes.

For the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), we conducted twice after having a face-to-face class. All of them agreed with the timing we scheduled. Each FGD had lasted for about 30 minutes. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed in Indonesian language. During the data analyses, we had listened repeatedly to the recordings and reread the transcripts for plenty of times. Transcripts were read and reread in a bid to “achieve the greatest possible familiarity with the phenomenon” (Kockelmans, 1975, p. 85). The data were also analyzed for regularities, together with thematic analysis.

Nevertheless, some limitations are supposed to be specifically expounded in advance before reaching the findings. First, our findings and analyses are mainly based on the perspectives of Indonesian female workers from Java, Indonesia. Thus, we ideally should have interviewed other ethnics as well. Second, the participants are from the same university, and all of them are female. That is to say, if we can add more interviews with male workers to our study, it will definitely further enrich our understanding of these Indonesian workers’ migrating experiences in Taiwan.

## **4.0 FINDINGS**

### ***4.1 Factors of Becoming Migrant Workers***

#### *4.1.1 Economic Factors*

Iqbal and Gusman (2015) used migration theory to examine what drove female migrant workers from West Java, Indonesia, to work abroad. The scheme of push and pull factors is equally applicable here to describe the motivations why our participants have become migrant workers. The push factors are related to their struggling domestic condition that forces them to move, while the pull factors indicate the incentives of the destination country (e.g. higher incomes) attract them to leave their homeland. Compared to the previous studies, the purpose of being migrant workers is mainly because of economic reasons. Thereby, it has directly brought an abundance of lower-skilled workers to the market accordingly. As a consequence, these individuals will easily consider going overseas, for they are told that they can earn more

by working overseas (IOM, 2010). Take Anik, for example. She has to shoulder the responsibility to support her family in terms of Indonesian tradition. She stated,

*Initially, I didn't want to be a migrant worker. But, conditions forced me since it was very difficult to find a job in Indonesia. Then, my mother asked me to be a migrant worker since they couldn't send me to university. Because I am the eldest child in our family, my parents hoped that I would help my brothers and sisters with their school fees.*

Like Anik, Bella, Ester and Dina have similar reasons to be migrant workers. The push factor of poverty in their country juxtaposes the pull factor of incentives in Taiwan with the same economic reason. According to the regulation in Taiwan, a migrant worker can earn at least the minimum wage; nonetheless, compared with the wages they earn in Indonesia, they can earn much higher salary per month. As the participants put it, it is the high salary that lured them to work here in Taiwan.

Similar to Dina, Bella also had a strong desire to become a migrant worker in Taiwan due to the high income compared to that in Indonesia. She has been working in Taiwan for eight years. Interestingly, her oldest sister was also a migrant worker in Taiwan. "I want to imitate what my sister did, because when going back to Indonesia after having working for years, she will become rich, having lots of money," said Bella. She mentioned her sister's successful story which theoretically reminds us of what Iqbal and Gusman (2015) describe: "the recent trend of push factor" for female migrant workers to migrate.

#### *4.1.2 Cultural Factors and Impacts*

From Bella's above statement, we can see that migrant labor has become a "quasi hereditary occupation" in Indonesia. To a large extent, family support and social value can be seen as push factors for female migrant workers to work overseas. Moreover, Anik and Bella both pointed out that they were the only daughters of their families respectively, and they had no choice but to take on the responsibility of supporting their families' financial well-beings (Lan, 2003). In other words, they had to remit money monthly to support their families' living expenditure, including their siblings' school fees. Traditionally, girls in Indonesian culture are seen as the assets of the family as breadwinners. It is the main reason that naturally forces them to work overseas for more financial aid. Nonetheless, the explanation does not stop here. We need to pay attention to the consequential effects of women's increased mobility. Women

definitely have been reformulating gender roles and cultural norms by remitting their salary back to Indonesia. As a result, women are not submissive and no longer play a subsidiary role in the family as before.

#### *4.1.3 Self-fulfillment*

According to Iqbal and Gusman (2015), recent female migrant workers from Indonesia were younger with lower educational background. In addition to the economic and cultural pushing factors, more and more women entered the migration labor market for “self-satisfaction.” Two of the participants, Cintia and Dina, were divorced. Both of them were married young and but divorced later because they could not accept their irresponsible and lazy husbands. Cintia’s story can be exemplary. Her decision to get divorced can explain this trend:

*I want to forget my ex-husband because he betrayed me for having an affair. Moreover, he is not a responsible man. He did not want to work, just staying home all day long. That is why I decided to leave him. I am sure that if I don't leave him, I cannot see the “new world.” As you can imagine, I will never see the beautiful countries such as Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.*

Similarly, Cintia’s and Dina’s husbands were unemployed after they got married. In their eyes, their husbands were not ambitious and nonchalant regarding finding a job to support their own families. Getting divorced thereby seems to be a wise way to put an end to their miserable marital life. As divorced women, they work overseas in the hope of letting the by-gones be by-gones, starting a brand-new life, and getting involved within an academic life.

## **4.2 Supporting Environments to Continue Their Education**

### *4.2.1 Employers*

All of the participants in this study had asked their employers for permission to attend classes. Cintia and Ester were luckier than the others. Their employers were supportive of their education plans. Actually, Ester had had a strong desire to continue her education since she worked with her former employer. But, her former employer didn’t allow her to do so because Ester had to do tremendous and even endless chores and routine jobs at home. After three years had passed, she finally stopped her contract and went back to Indonesia. She tried to find a job in Indonesia, but in vain, for there were few job opportunities. Reluctantly, she had no choice



but to come back to Taiwan, reluctantly getting a new job again. Luckily, her new employer was kind to her, treating her very nicely. After having worked with her new employer for several years, she asked whether she could attend online college during her leisure time. Much to her surprise, they agreed with her intention and were incredibly supportive. Thereby, it highly motivated her to continue her further education. Ester's story indicates that she was not only lucky but persistent as well. It is her strong motivation that encouraged her to continue on no matter how meandering the road was ahead of her. She stated:

*I am very lucky to have my Lǎobǎn (employer). They directly agreed with my decision when I asked them if I could go to college, studying online. More interestingly, whenever they see me sit there doing nothing or find me playing games with my mobile phone, my employer will push me to study harder in an encouraging way. They usually ask me, "Why don't you study? Don't play with your mobile phone too often. You should study harder."*

Despite the fact that Bella and Anik also gained permissions from their employers, their employers did not reject them in appearance, but were not as enthusiastic as Ester's employer. They reckoned that the migrant workers could study for further education of course, but they were afraid that Bella and Anik would fail to do their jobs well if they dedicated too much time to studying. Owing to this, both of them tried their best to make their employers believe in them by getting their routine jobs and chores well done on time. In so doing, Bella and Anik successfully met their employers' requirements and the job ethics without jeopardizing their status as migrant workers. As Lan (2003) put it, most Taiwanese are under the impression that the Philippine migrant workers are "smart yet unruly," whereas Indonesians are "stupid yet obedient." In the study, these female Indonesians were certainly not stupid at all. Instead, they properly and modestly showed their employers how understanding and "docile" they were.

Unlike the others, Cintia had a totally different story. After telling her employer her study plan, she realized that her employer was not really supportive. From then on, she never and ever asked her employer again. Cintia was confident that she would manage to get all her work well done. After having enrolled the online classes of the Indonesia Open University and studying at night after work, she felt comfortable to do so, and her employer did not notice it. In reality, the online classes usually begin at 10 p.m. Therefore, Cintia said that she had no difficulty studying during that period of time, for her employer and the whole family had gone to bed already. According to Malay and Axelrod (2015), they regard "migration as a matter of

chance or fate.” As Cintia said that all she could do was keep praying diligently. In the interview, Cintia held an optimistic attitude, saying, “Good fortune is always with me, for where there is a will, there is a way. If you persist in sticking to your goal, there must be a some way out in the long run”.

#### *4.2.2 The Families*

If there are disagreements or even conflicts between the employers’ interests and the migrant workers’ intention for further schooling, there will be potential impacts on their families. Besides the income from their employers, the financial support from their original families plays a vital role in their continuing further studies. The support from their families can help alleviate their anxiety to pursue their goals. Before the participants decided to attend college, they had thorough discussions with their original families, particularly their parents or husbands.

As a matter of fact, all the participants are required to shoulder the responsibility of being breadwinners, despite the fact that they are overseas and physically separated from their families. They have to take care of not only their employers’ family but their original family as well. It appears sophisticated and even complicated regarding the social and personal factors and expenditure of leaving their family members working overseas. On top of that, we first-handedly learned that, because of the separation from their families, female migrant workers had to consciously try their best to work much harder in an attempt to maintain the family tie. If not, they would be subjugated into the neighbors’ gossips. With the aid of their successive remittances from Taiwan, it has given rise to tremendous economic improvements in their hometown or villages. However, on the other hand, because of the long-term separation, it has also brought about lots of marital problems and even divorces, for they or their husbands tend to have affairs and then ruin the marriage eventually.

#### *4.2.3 The Staff and Tutors of the University*

In essence, the staff and the tutors play a vital role in migrant workers’ studies. When it comes to the quality of the staff and the tutors, the participants claimed that the tutors at their university had different characters and different teaching methods. Everything was fresh to them, for it was a great experience for them to be students again. Regarding the office staff, all participants were satisfied with their friendly and sincere service. For example, the staff would enthusiastically answer all kinds of questions or help solve all problems whenever they had.

They indicated that there were satisfactory answers or great help to make them feel comfortable and satisfied with gaining their bachelor's degree.

### ***4.3 Working while Studying***

Working and studying at the same time is full of challenges for these migrant workers. While working and studying at the same time, the migrant workers would have a hard time facing a variety of difficulties, including their employers' permission and their time-management for academic performance. Sometimes, some of them were overwhelmed by the pressure and limitations, for they usually had trouble striking the balance between their missions and studies. That is, all of them indicated that they were tight up with housework quite often, so there was a very small amount of time left for them to study. Plenty of housework took up most of their time. However, all of them still stuck to their goal and insisted on continuing their further education. Meanwhile, they had to be well prepared for the courses physically and mentally. Since the online class is from 9p.m. to 11p.m. or from 10p.m. to 12p.m., they had to remain sober and concentrative in online class. If there was no mechanic problem, they could do it well. If not, they would have difficulty understanding the lectures and could not follow. When the situation happens, they would become anxious, for they had to find some other time to listen to the lecture again by video recording.

According to Dina, Bella, and Anik, they had no choice but to make a pause to their online course whenever their employers felt a need to ask them to do some routine jobs. Sometimes the students would ask for a temporary leave for the extra jobs interrupting the lecture. For tutors, it could be a dilemma and quite troublesome to deal with, for they had no idea how to help them, although they were willing to help the hard-working students in any possible way. These touchy and complicated situations could happen from time to time for some of them.

As for Cintia and Ester, they were luckier and had more flexible leisure time to have their online classes. It is mainly because their employers never and ever "disturbed" them after 9 p.m. In other words, the migrant workers are supposed to finish all the routine jobs in time before 9 p.m. Thereby, the two cases have no problem taking online classes then. It is also understandable that all of them had to sacrifice their sleeping hours for two more hours. If they happened to have some extra breaks from work, they usually made use of it to study or to do their assignments. It can be very exhaustive but challenging to most students, particularly to these ambitious and industrious female migrant workers.

## **5.0 DISCUSSION**

There are enormous studies on Indonesian migrant workers in Taiwan. Generally speaking, most of them mainly deal with the exploitative situations or stereotypes to the migrant workers, or examine the laborer and immigration policies. In addition to the academic discourse on Indonesian migrant workers in Taiwan, this study focuses on five female migrant workers who also study at Indonesia Open University, Taiwan Branch.

There are approximately 6.5 million Indonesian laborers currently working overseas, of which most of them are women (Malay & Axelrod, 2015). According to Research Center for Development and Information National Authority for the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Overseas Workers, these overseas migrant workers had remitted up to US\$ 9.42 billion back to Indonesia in 2015. In reality, there is an increasing number of Indonesian migrant workers recently; however, their education and skill profile unfortunately still remains low. As a result, the distance learning programs offered by Indonesia Open University have been made available for Indonesian migrant workers to pursue their dreams to gain the bachelor's degree from abroad.

From this above-mentioned, it comes as a surprise to find that most of the students at Indonesia Open University, up to eighty percent, are female. Obviously, there must be some hindrances, preventing male migrant workers from further studying. For one thing, most of male migrant workers lack of motivation because they don't reckon that they really need a higher degree. For another, they work at factories with tremendous painstaking jobs; thereby, most of them are unwilling to study further, with exhaustion after work. Worse still, their working schedule is not really stable, for they are often asked to work overtime. Owing to this, it poses a challenge to these male migrant workers when speaking of studying for a higher degree. On the other hand, compared to male migrant workers, it is much easier for most female migrant workers to have a flexible schedule due to the work content as caregivers or housemaids. As a result, most female migrant workers can choose to study further and have a strong desire to work their way through college abroad.

Malay and Axelrod (2015) elaborated on the phenomenon of booming female migrant worker market. They argued that nowadays, in many cities in Indonesia, there are plenty of areas known as 'migrant lanes,' in which the new houses have been built by the remittances from lots of migrant workers. "Thick with fresh paint, the houses stand as living proof, as proud boasts even, that success abroad is possible." It is mainly because these female migrant workers have devoted themselves to their families by working very hard overseas for years and

continuously sending back lots of money to help build new houses or have old houses renovated.

More importantly, there are two main reasons why Indonesian migrant workers choose to work in Taiwan. First, they can earn much more salary compared to the low-paid jobs in their own country; second, the reason why they work here is due to the fact that the two countries, Taiwan and Indonesia, have signed agreement of sending and receiving migrant workers, so the basic rights of the migrant workers can be legitimately and legally protected by laws. Thereby, when successful migrant workers go back to Indonesia, they set a good example for other villagers; consequently, more and more Indonesians are willing to come to work in Taiwan.

In this study, most participants in the study indicate that they prefer face-to-face learning to online learning because it is much easier to understand what they are learning in doing so. Despite the fact that online learning is thriving and booming, many students still prefer the traditional courses which offer face-to-face interaction (Maki & Maki, 2002). They also claim that they can be more successful learners when face-to-face learning is conducted, due to the fact that they can have active interactions with their tutors and classmates (Beard, Harper, & Riley 2004).

In most participants' eyes, there are plenty of advantages of online learning. It is an efficient teaching method in terms of economic or time factors. Most importantly, considering its economic benefits, on-line learning is widely used to combat the rising cost of post-secondary education, credit equivalency at the post-secondary level, and the possibility of providing tremendous global villagers with education to the fullest with a broad connection (Bartley & Golek, 2004; Gratton-Lavoie & Stanley, 2009; Lorenzetti, 2013).

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

Indonesian overseas migrant workers had remitted up to US\$ US\$ 9.42 billion in total back to Indonesia in 2015. As such, the role these migrant workers play in economic aid and financial support to their motherland, Indonesia, is of significance. In addition, in Taiwan, interesting is that the number of female migrant workers is much higher than that of male migrant workers. Moreover, female migrant workers have stronger motivation to gain higher education. Thereby, this study aims to explore why and how the female migrant workers are highly motivated to work their way through college in Taiwan. In spite of the conservative traditional obligations to females, the Indonesian society has bestowed them the title of national heroines in a bid to acknowledge their contributions to their own country. Interestingly, all the females as indicated

above subscribed to the gendered narrative of motherhood or mothering, but not the discourse of nationalism. Meanwhile, based on this research, their stories have alluded to the social environments stricken with unemployment and poverty. They will continue to support their families financially from abroad in the hope of getting rid of poverty.

While working and studying in Taiwan, they face lots of challenges, but they have a strong desire to have a better life. They become overseas breadwinners since they shoulder the responsibility for supporting their original families. Besides working as housemaids or caregivers, they also do part-time jobs in order to enhance their skills and make the most of their spare time for further studies, hoping for the more income career in the future. In addition, while working and studying at the same time, they really have to manage their time well. Some of them may be tired every day since they are domestic worker with heavy workload. In addition, while studying at the university, they also face some challenges such as the problem of the fare of long distance to travel to have face-to-face discussions in class, lots of assignments and homework, and other inclusive expenditures.

Living far away from their families also inevitably forces them to be more independent. They stay in Taiwan without any help from their families. Thus, being migrant workers with lots of challenges makes them more eager not to be workers only, but to be some other identities such as students. They hope to change the fate of their families through supporting them financially. In their eyes, it can be thought of as the only possible way to improve this poor situation quickly and directly. In spite of that fact that being workers and students at the same time can be very time-consuming and even painstaking, to all of them, these thought-provoking classes offer them great opportunities to rethink what they can be in the future. Namely, they firmly believe that they can make a difference to their families and their own future. In a sense, through studying at Indonesia Open University, they consciously and subconsciously convert so-called self-sacrifice and liability into an asset in a possible and workable way.

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