RESILIENCE-BASED HUMAN SECURITY: A STUDY OF INDONESIAN MIGRANT CHILDREN AND MUHAMMADIYAH IN MALAYSIA

Muhammad Fajhriyadi Hastira [1]*, Ali Maksum [2]

[1,2] Master of International Relations, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Muhammadiyah University Yogyakarta, Jalan Brawijaya, Geblagan, Tamantirto, Kec. Kasihan, Bantul Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta 55183, Indonesia
m.fajhriyadi.psc24@mail.umy.ac.id

Abstract

This study examines the human security threats faced by Indonesian migrant children in Malaysia and analyzes how Muhammadiyah contributes to strengthening their resilience through community-based education. Drawing on a qualitative case study, this research uses literature review and document analysis from international agencies, bilateral cooperation policies, and Muhammadiyah's educational initiatives in Sabah and Sarawak. The findings reveal persistent structural vulnerabilities, minimal access to formal education, healthcare, and legal protection, caused by undocumented status. However, migrant children demonstrate adaptive capacities shaped by social networks, community solidarity, and alternative learning spaces. Muhammadiyah plays a significant role as a non-state resilience actor by providing community schools that reinforce academic, cultural, and spiritual identity. These findings advance the concept of resilience-based human security by integrating gendered experiences of migrant children into the analysis. The study suggests strengthening multi-stakeholder collaboration, recognizing community schools within ASEAN mechanisms, and improving cross-border child protection policies to ensure more inclusive and sustainable protection.

Keywords: ASEAN Migrant Children; Human Security; Resilience; Gender; Muhammadiyah.

Abstrak

Studi ini mengkaji ancaman keamanan manusia yang dihadapi oleh anak-anak migran Indonesia di Malaysia dan menganalisis bagaimana Muhammadiyah berkontribusi dalam memperkuat ketahanan mereka melalui pendidikan berbasis komunitas. Berbasis pada studi kasus kualitatif, penelitian ini menggunakan tinjauan literatur dan analisis dokumen dari lembaga internasional, kebijakan kerja sama bilateral, serta inisiatif pendidikan Muhammadiyah di Sabah dan Sarawak. Temuan menunjukkan kerentanan struktural yang persisten, terutama akses terbatas terhadap pendidikan formal, layanan kesehatan, dan perlindungan hukum akibat status tidak berdokumen. Namun, anak-anak migran menunjukkan kapasitas adaptif yang dibentuk oleh jaringan sosial, solidaritas komunitas, dan ruang belajar alternatif. Muhammadiyah memainkan peran signifikan sebagai aktor ketahanan non-negara dengan menyediakan sekolah komunitas yang memperkuat identitas akademik, budaya, dan spiritual. Temuan ini memperkaya konsep keamanan manusia berbasis ketahanan dengan mengintegrasikan

pengalaman gender anak-anak migran ke dalam analisis. Studi ini menyarankan penguatan kolaborasi multipihak, pengakuan sekolah komunitas dalam mekanisme ASEAN, dan perbaikan kebijakan perlindungan anak lintas batas untuk memastikan perlindungan yang lebih inklusif dan berkelanjutan.

Kata kunci*: Anak Migran ASEAN; Keamanan Manusia; Resiliensi; Gender; Muhammadiyah.*

INTRODUCTION

International migration has become a growing global phenomenon over the past two decades, with Southeast Asia being one of the most dynamic regions. Indonesia and Malaysia are among the most significant migration corridors within the ASEAN region. According to an IOM report (2022), there are an estimated 2.7 million Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia, some of whom are undocumented. This migration involves not only adults, but also children who move with their parents.

These migrant children face structural vulnerability, mainly due to their undocumented status, which limits their access to formal education, health services, and legal protection (Noveria A., 2021). Recent research shows that many Indonesian migrant children in Malaysia are not enrolled in the formal education system and rely on alternative schools run by communities or civil society organizations (Azmi H. and Hassan, Z., 2020). This situation confirms that the issue of migration is not merely a labor issue, but also concerns the human security of the younger generation.

In the context of Malaysia, thousands of Indonesian migrant children grow up without certainty of citizenship status or social protection guarantees. Limited access to formal education means many depend on community schools or non-governmental institutions. UNICEF (2023) reports that more than 150,000 migrant children in Malaysia, including those from Indonesia, face the risk of dropping out of school due to restrictive policies and high education costs. In addition, the uncertainty of their legal status makes them vulnerable to exploitation, discrimination, and social exclusion (UNDP, 2021). These conditions show that

child migration in Southeast Asia is not only a matter of population mobility, but also a humanitarian issue that requires cross-actor intervention. Moreover, within gender studies, scholars argue that child migration carries differentiated implications for boys and girls, especially regarding social roles, exposure to exploitation, and access to learning spaces (Piper, 2021; Suárez-Orozco, 2021). Thus, this issue is not merely administrative, but fundamentally intersects with rights-based and gendered dimensions of security.

Definitions of migrant children vary in academic literature. According to the International Organization for Migration (2020), migrant children are individuals under the age of 18 who move across national borders, either alone or with their parents. UNICEF emphasizes that migrant children should not only be seen as followers of their parents' migration, but also as subjects with full human rights that the state must guarantee (UNICEF, 2023). Several sociological studies on migration highlight that migrant children are in a vulnerable position due to a combination of factors, including their age, legal status, and limited access to basic services (Kusuma J., 2021).

Meanwhile, Suárez-Orozco (2021) emphasizes that migrant children should be understood regarding physical mobility and the social, psychological, and cultural experiences that influence their identity. In the context of Southeast Asia, Azmi et al. (2020) highlight that migrant children often experience double marginalization: as migrants and as children. This definition is essential to emphasize that the status of migrant children is inherent in the political and social dynamics of the destination country.

These differences in definition reveal a broad conceptual spectrum. However, despite variations in the definition of migrant children, several commonalities can be identified. First, almost all definitions emphasize the vulnerability of migrant children to violations of their fundamental rights, particularly in relation to education, health, and legal protection (UNHCR, 2021). Second, there are differences in perspective: some view migrant children as a passive and dependent group, while the latest perspective begins to emphasize their potential for resilience and adaptive capacity (Idris A., 2022). This issue becomes relevant when linked to

the context of Indonesia–Malaysia, where many Indonesian migrant children are undocumented and therefore face legal and social barriers. Many studies have focused on vulnerability, but the dimension of resilience, especially concerning the role of non-state actors such as Muhammadiyah, is rarely discussed (Suharto, 2023).

For this study, migrant children are defined as individuals under the age of 18 who have moved to Malaysia with their Indonesian migrant worker parents, whether documented or undocumented, and face limited access to fundamental rights. This understanding allows the study to link aspects of human security, especially education, with resilience. In other words, migrant children are not only vulnerable subjects but also agents capable of building resilience through the support of communities and social organizations such as Muhammadiyah.

Existing literature highlights significant vulnerability among migrant children, yet tends to portray them primarily as passive victims of state policies (Noveria A., 2021). Meanwhile, global studies on child resilience emphasize that children possess adaptive capacities shaped by interactions with family, community, and institutions (Masten, 2021; Ungar, 2021). In the Indonesian-Malaysian corridor, only limited studies explore how migrant children negotiate these vulnerabilities, particularly through community-based education provided by non-state actors. Research on Muhammadiyah's transnational programs documents their contribution to overseas Indonesian communities but rarely analyzes their significance for children's human security in a systematic and theoretically grounded manner (Idris A., 2022; Suharto, 2023).

Thus, a significant gap exists in research. The majority of literature emphasizes the vulnerability of migrant children, while the perspective of resilience is still underarticulated. Additionally, the role of transnational Islamic organizations, such as Muhammadiyah, is rarely discussed in the context of human security. In fact, amid the state's limitations in reaching migrant children, non-state actors are present as providers of essential alternative education services (Idris A., 2022). This study seeks to address this gap by integrating the concepts of human security and resilience.

This study aims to analyze the human security threats experienced by Indonesian migrant children in Malaysia and examine how Muhammadiyah plays a role in building their resilience through community education. The primary focus is on education as a key dimension of human security, while examining how resilience is formed in the context of migration, which is often limited in scope. Using a qualitative approach, this study aims to understand the experiences, meanings, and adaptation strategies of migrant children in complex socio-political contexts.

Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the study of human security by incorporating a resilience perspective that emphasizes the capacity of individuals and communities to adapt and respond to challenges. The integration of this concept enables human security to be understood not only in terms of state protection, but also in terms of the adaptive capacity of civil society. This study contributes to the development of a community-based education model for migrant children, which can be replicated in other migration destination countries in the ASEAN region.

Finally, this study confirms that migrant children are not only a vulnerable group, but also subjects who have the capacity to survive and thrive with the support of an appropriate social system. The role of a non-state actor underscores the significance of the transnational dimension in protecting migrant children. Focusing on resilience-based human security, this research is expected to provide conceptual updates and practical contributions in formulating more inclusive policies for migrant children in Southeast Asia.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative-descriptive approach to explore the meanings, experiences, and social dynamics faced by Indonesian migrant children in Malaysia, with a particular focus on human security and the role of Muhammadiyah. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to deeply understand social realities through contextual interpretation of the data obtained (Creswell C. N., 2018). Data collection techniques were carried out through literature studies and document analysis. The literature study

included reports from international institutions such as the IOM, UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO, and ASEAN, which documented the conditions of migrant children in the ASEAN region, as well as the latest academic research published between 2020 and 2025. Meanwhile, the document analysis focused on Indonesia–Malaysia bilateral policies regarding migrant workers, ASEAN instruments related to child protection, and Muhammadiyah education programs implemented in Sabah and Sarawak. With this combination, the data obtained is comprehensive, allowing the study to examine the issue from the perspective of state policy, communities, and non-state actors (Suharto, 2023; UNICEF, 2023). The analysis applies thematic coding to identify recurring patterns of vulnerability and adaptive capacity across individual, community, and institutional levels (Braun V., 2021; Sugiyono, 2019).

A phenomenological orientation is incorporated to understand how migrant children experience structural barriers and negotiate daily insecurities. Additionally, a gender lens is applied to reveal differences between boys' and girls' patterns of vulnerability and resilience, reflecting calls in gendered migration studies for more nuanced analytical frameworks. This study uses three levels of resilience as an analytical framework: individual, community, and institutional. At the personal level, the analysis focuses on the adaptation strategies of migrant children who face limitations in their rights to education and protection. At the community level, the focus is on community schools and migrant social networks as spaces for building solidarity. Meanwhile, the institutional level highlights Muhammadiyah's contribution as a transnational actor in strengthening migrant children's access to education (Idris F., 2022; Ungar, 2021). Triangulation of multiple secondary data sources ensures rigor and minimizes positionality bias, while the case study design allows for a contextual examination of resilience processes within migrant communities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the circumstances confronting Indonesian migrant children in Malaysia constitute a paradoxical situation, characterized by their structural vulnerability and concurrent adaptive capacity. On

the one hand, the state's failure to guarantee children's fundamental rights without discrimination is demonstrated by limited access to formal education, health services, and legal protection. Conversely, migrant children and their communities have been shown to employ resilience strategies through social networks, solidarity, and the utilization of alternative schools managed by civil society organizations. Muhammadiyah's role as an essential actor in addressing this protection gap is evident through its community-based education initiatives. This education not only provides academic knowledge but also strengthens the cultural and spiritual identity of migrant children. The subsequent discourse aims to elucidate the dynamics of human security for Indonesian migrant children in Malaysia, while concurrently delineating the conceptualization of Muhammadiyah's contribution within a resilience-based human security paradigm.

The Dynamics of Human Security for Indonesian Migrant Children in Malaysia

The phenomenon of Indonesian labor migration to Malaysia has been going on for decades. Sabah and Sarawak are the main destinations because the plantation and construction sectors depend heavily on migrant labor (International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2022, 2023). However, children in this migration flow face enormous challenges in fulfilling their fundamental rights, particularly in accessing education, healthcare, and legal protection. According to a UNICEF report (2021), more than 80,000 Indonesian migrant children in Sabah live without access to formal education due to their parents' status as undocumented workers. Girls often experience added vulnerability due to gendered expectations within households, such as caregiving or domestic responsibilities, which further reduce their participation in schooling, aligning with global patterns documented by Piper (2021). Limited healthcare access reinforces everyday insecurity, particularly among younger children confronting untreated illnesses or malnutrition. This situation poses a real threat to *human security,* particularly the dimensions *of freedom from want* and *freedom from fear* emphasized by UNDP (1994). Without fundamental rights, migrant children are trapped in a cycle of social vulnerability that hinders their future development.

Education is the most crucial issue in the *human security* dynamics of migrant children. UNESCO data (2021) shows that around 61% of Indonesian migrant children in Malaysia are not enrolled in formal schools due to document legality issues and immigration policies that restrict their access. In some areas of Sabah, community schools managed by civil society organizations, including Muhammadiyah, are the only way for migrant children to obtain basic education (Amiruddin, 2022; Syafrudie & Haryo, 2021; Thahir, 2024). It demonstrates the state's inability to guarantee universal education rights for all children without discrimination, as stipulated in *the Convention on the Rights of the Child* (MacPherson, 1989; Saarnik, Sindi, & Toros, 2024). From a gendered perspective, girls tend to form tightly knit support groups within community schools, helping them navigate discrimination and cultural isolation. These observations align with the multisystemic resilience framework (Ungar, 2021), which views resilience as emerging not only from individual strength but also from supportive social environments. Thus, the issue of education is not merely an administrative problem, but a direct threat to the dimension *of human security.*

In addition to education, migrant children's access to healthcare also shows striking disparities. UNICEF (2023) reports that undocumented migrant children are often denied access to public healthcare facilities in Malaysia or are charged high fees that they cannot afford. A study by Ahmad et al. (2018) found that migrant families are more likely to use small, private clinics, which are often cheaper, but the quality of service is often inadequate. This situation creates new vulnerabilities, such as malnutrition and delayed treatment of diseases. Such health threats illustrate the dimension *of human security* as everyday human security that transcends issues of state security, in line with Sen's (1999) critique of the importance of expanding the focus of security to aspects of human development.

The dimension *of protection from fear* is also very prominent in the lives of Indonesian migrant children in Malaysia. These children live in fear of immigration raids that could result in arrest and deportation at any time. According to a report by SUHAKAM (2023), the practice of detaining migrant children in Malaysian immigration centers still occurs, despite international criticism. Poor detention

conditions, including overcrowding and a lack of basic facilities, cause deep trauma to children. From a *human security* perspective, this situation shows how the state can be a threat rather than a source. It supports San Jose (2015) argument that the concept *of human security* is relevant for examining the impact of state policies on vulnerable groups, including migrant children.

However, despite these vulnerabilities, migrant children also demonstrate forms of social adaptation in their local environments. A qualitative study by Loganathan et al. (2019) and a study by Ab Rahman et al. (2016) in Malaysia, it was found that migrant children develop cross-ethnic friendships with local children to cope with discrimination. They also utilize community spaces, such as madrasas and non-formal education centers, to build social identity. It shows that even though their *human security* is threatened, there is an adaptive capacity that deserves attention. This adaptive capacity opens up space to analyze this issue through the lens of *resilience theory.*

Overall, the dynamics *of human security for* Indonesian migrant children in Malaysia show a contrast between structural vulnerability and adaptive capacity at the individual and community levels. Vulnerabilities in education, health, and legal protection reflect the state's limitations in guaranteeing the fundamental rights of migrant children, while coping strategies that emerge from daily experiences demonstrate potential resilience. These findings highlight the importance of integrating human security with resilience theory to comprehend the threats faced by migrant children and their potential for adaptation. Thus, the focus of analysis can be expanded from simply viewing migrant children as victims to seeing them as actors with specific capacities.

Furthermore, the dynamics *of human security* for Indonesian migrant children in Malaysia are often described solely in terms of the vulnerabilities they face, ranging from loss of educational rights to limited access to healthcare. This approach is essential, but it has weaknesses because it tends to portray migrant children solely as victims without the capacity to adapt. Thus, through the theory of resilience, we can see that even though these children live in limited circumstances, they and the migrant community are still able to develop survival

strategies, for example, through social networks, community solidarity, or alternative schools built by Muhammadiyah (Masten, 2021; Ungar, 2021).

However, if resilience is understood superficially, there is a risk of neglecting the state's structural responsibility to guarantee children's rights. Resilience should be positioned as a complement, not a substitute, to the *human security* framework, so that the analysis does not stop at the narrative of survival, but also encourages more equitable policy changes and institutional protection (Chandler, 2020; Joseph, 2018).

Muhammadiyah's Role in Education as an Institutional Resilience Strategy

The Indonesian government has demonstrated its commitment to protecting the educational rights of migrant children in Malaysia by establishing *the Indonesian School in Kota Kinabalu (SIKK)* and developing *Community Learning Centers (CLCs)* in the Sabah and Sarawak regions. SIKK, which is directly coordinated by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture and the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, utilizes the official Indonesian curriculum and functions as a formal educational center for the children of migrant workers. Meanwhile, the CLC program, which was developed in the early 2000s, operates in plantation areas with the support of companies and local governments (KBRI Kuala Lumpur, 2022; Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, 2021).

These two initiatives show that the state is not absent, but is institutionally present in providing access to education for migrant children. Muhammadiyah's community schools operate as alternative safe learning spaces that integrate Indonesian curriculum elements with religious and cultural values. These schools provide academic continuity, emotional support, and identity preservation for migrant children, particularly boys who experience stereotyping as future laborers and girls who face heightened risks of domestic confinement. Through these programs, Muhammadiyah strengthens community solidarity and creates what Suárez-Orozco (2021) terms *cultural resilience*, in which children maintain a sense of belonging despite structural exclusion.

However, the reach of these two programs is still limited. Data from the Indonesian Ministry of Education (2021) shows that the number of Indonesian

migrant children in Sabah and Sarawak exceeds 150,000, while SIKK can only accommodate around 2,000 students. More than 300 CLCs also face similar limitations because they only operate around large plantations. At the same time, many migrant children live in urban areas or in areas that do not have CLCs (UNICEF, 2020). Legal barriers imposed by the Malaysian authorities further complicate the issue because, although CLCs and SIKKs function as educational spaces, the diplomas obtained are often not recognized in the Malaysian formal education system.

This situation illustrates that the presence of the country of origin, although significant, has not fully addressed the complexity of migrant children's education issues. Many undocumented migrant children remain unreachable due to their parents' legal status. They are even reluctant to enroll their children in formal schools, fearing detection by immigration authorities (UNICEF & International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2021). This situation highlights the gap between the country's formal policies and the reality on the ground, where most migrant children remain marginalized from access to proper education.

It is where Muhammadiyah's role becomes relevant as a complement, not a replacement, to state initiatives. Through self-managed community schools, Muhammadiyah reaches migrant children who are outside the reach of SIKK and CLC. These schools not only emphasize academic curriculum, but also impart spiritual values, community solidarity, and life skills relevant to their circumstances (Amiruddin, 2022; Syafrudie & Haryo, 2021; Thahir, 2024). Muhammadiyah, as one of the most prominent Islamic organizations in Indonesia, has played an essential role in providing alternative education services for Indonesian migrant children in Malaysia.

Since the early 2000s, Muhammadiyah has established community schools in Sabah and Sarawak that serve as safe spaces for migrant children who cannot access formal education due to their parents' legal status (Muhammadiyah, 2021; Muhammadiyah Education Board, 2022). This program aligns with the idea *of institutional resilience,* where non-state institutions take over some of the functions of the state to protect vulnerable groups (UNESCO, 2022; UNICEF, 2021, 2023).

Amidst limited official access, Muhammadiyah community schools not only teach academic knowledge but also build the cultural and spiritual identity of migrant children, so that they continue to have a strong social foundation despite being in a situation of vulnerability.

The education provided by Muhammadiyah is not only curricular in nature, but also emphasizes *life skills* that help children face the challenges of daily life as part of a migrant community. For example, through a contextual curriculum, children are encouraged to understand the values of solidarity, independence, and cross-cultural adaptation (Amiruddin, 2022; Syafrudie & Haryo, 2021; Thahir, 2024). It shows that community-based education acts as a space for building resilience beyond mere "survival" and develops into the capacity to imagine the future. Muhammadiyah's contribution can fill the structural void left by the state, while also demonstrating that non-state actors have significance in the framework of *human security.*

However, Muhammadiyah's role also faces significant limitations. The operation of these community schools often faces legal obstacles from the Malaysian authorities, who consider the presence of migrant schools to be "illegal" (International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2020, 2022). On the other hand, financial support that depends on individual donations and Muhammadiyah philanthropy often makes the program's sustainability fragile. This situation illustrates the dynamics *of institutional resilience* that are not entirely stable, where the adaptive capacity of non-state institutions must contend with structural pressures from the host country's policies. Without more formal institutional support from ASEAN or the Indonesian government, Muhammadiyah's initiatives are prone to being trapped in a cycle of institutional vulnerability.

Analysis using resilience theory reveals that Muhammadiyah's role is to build institutional resilience and strengthen community resilience by engaging parents and migrant communities in the education process. Parents do not merely act as beneficiaries, but also participate in providing resources, for example, by becoming volunteer teachers or school logistics supporters (ASEAN, 2021; The ASEAN Secretariat, 2022; UNESCO, 2021). It aligns with Ungar's (2021) view that

resilience is not merely an individual trait, but a process of interaction between individuals, communities, and institutions. Thus, Muhammadiyah is an education service provider and a space for social articulation that strengthens migrant community networks.

However, criticism should be directed at the narrative of resilience built through Muhammadiyah education. There is a tendency for the success of community schools to overshadow the state's responsibility to provide formal education access for migrant children. As Chandler (2020) argues, using the concept of resilience in global policy often shifts the burden of responsibility from the state to communities and individuals. In this context, the resilience initiated by Muhammadiyah has the potential to be narrated as a permanent solution, when in fact it is only a temporary measure. This criticism is essential to ensure that Muhammadiyah's role is not merely a substitute for the state. Instead, it becomes a moral and political pressure for the state to recognize and expand access to education for migrant children.

Furthermore, an in-depth analysis shows that Muhammadiyah's strategy in establishing community schools is also a form of cultural resistance against structural exclusion. By providing education based on Islamic values and Indonesian identity, Muhammadiyah creates a space where migrant children can maintain their national and religious identities. It is crucial because many migrant children experience an identity crisis due to their disconnection from Malaysia's citizenship-based formal education system (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2022). Thus, Muhammadiyah education protects children's fundamental rights and serves as an instrument of cultural resilience, strengthening their social bonds as part of the Indonesian diaspora.

Theoretical and Practical Implications: Linking Resilience to the Human Security of Migrant Children in ASEAN

The findings of this study show that combining the *human security* framework and resilience theory provides a new perspective in understanding the dynamics of the lives of Indonesian migrant children in Malaysia. Until now, *human security* has often been positioned within the framework of *freedom from fear* and *freedom from*

want (UNDP, 1994), emphasizing vulnerability and threats. However, by incorporating resilience, the analysis becomes more holistic because it highlights what is missing and how children, communities, and institutions respond to situations of limitation. This approach aligns with Ungar's (2021) idea that resilience is not merely an individual capacity, but also the result of broader social, political, and cultural interactions.

The findings support the development of a resilience-based human security framework that emphasizes structural vulnerabilities shaped by legal status and migration policies, adaptive capacities developed through social networks, community institutions, and cultural identity, gendered differences in how children experience insecurity and build resilience, and the critical role of non-state actors in bridging protection gaps. This framework demonstrates that security for migrant children is not solely dependent on state guarantees but emerges from interactions between families, communities, and grassroots institutions. Integrating gender into this framework strengthens its analytical depth, revealing that boys and girls navigate insecurities differently and require differentiated support.

Theoretically, the integration of these two frameworks shows that *the human security* of migrant children cannot be viewed solely as the responsibility of the state. Migrant children are active subjects with the capacity to adapt, while non-state actors such as Muhammadiyah can be catalysts in creating safe spaces. This perspective critiques previous literature that has overly emphasized the vulnerability of migrant children (Harkins, 2020; Piper, 2021; UNICEF, 2021b), without providing space for narratives of strength and resilience. Thus, this study offers a conceptual update, namely "*resilience-based human security*," which combines the protection of rights with strengthening adaptive capacities.

Furthermore, *resilience-based human security* also broadens the understanding of *human security*. Whereas previously the primary focus was on the threats faced, integration with resilience emphasizes the capacity to overcome these threats. This perspective is relevant to the context of migrant children, who are often marginalized by the nation-state system. Thus, this study adds to the literature on child migration and contributes to developing a more contextual theory of *human*

security in the ASEAN region, where cross-border migration is a structural phenomenon (Acharya, 2021).

Therefore, *resilience-based human security* should be positioned not as an end but as an analytical tool that reveals protection gaps and urges policy change. In this way, research not only highlights the capacity of migrant children to adapt but also strengthens advocacy for their rights to be fully recognized by the state and the region. It also avoids the risk of obscuring the reality that the root of the problem lies in structural inequality, discriminatory policies, and the weakness of the international legal framework related to the protection of migrant children (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2022).

From a practical standpoint, these findings have significant implications for ASEAN policy. To date, ASEAN still treats the issue of migrant children as part of its labor policy and does not yet have a comprehensive cross-border child protection mechanism (The ASEAN Secretariat, 2022). The community education model developed by Muhammadiyah in Malaysia can inspire the ASEAN framework to establish best practices for protecting migrant children. If adopted regionally, this approach would provide emergency education services and strengthen social cohesion in areas with high migration mobility.

However, criticism needs to be directed at the risks of using the narrative of resilience in the context of international policy. As Chandler (2020) argues, resilience is often used to justify reducing the state's responsibility and shifting the burden to individuals or communities. In the context of ASEAN, this could mean that member states rely on NGO initiatives such as Muhammadiyah without providing adequate structural support. Thus, it is important to emphasize that resilience in the framework of *human security* should be understood as a transitional mechanism, not a permanent solution, which encourages states to strengthen their commitment to protecting the rights of migrant children.

The findings of this study also highlight several policy implications that are essential for improving the protection of Indonesian migrant children in Malaysia. First, Indonesia and Malaysia need to strengthen bilateral cooperation by integrating child protection, particularly access to education and health, into

existing labor migration frameworks. Current agreements primarily address the rights of adult migrant workers, leaving children's needs insufficiently regulated. Both governments should adopt child-sensitive migration policies, including simplified enrollment procedures for undocumented migrant children and reduced administrative barriers for access to basic services. A gender-responsive approach is important to ensure that girls, who are often burdened with domestic responsibilities or exposed to higher risks of exploitation, receive equal opportunities for education and protection.

Second, recognition of community-based education initiatives is crucial. Muhammadiyah's community schools have demonstrated their capacity to fill institutional gaps, particularly for undocumented children who remain outside formal systems. Thus, Indonesia should formalize support for these initiatives through curriculum standardization, teacher training, and sustainable financial mechanisms. Meanwhile, Malaysia could adopt a humanitarian approach by allowing community schools to operate under regulated frameworks without legal penalties. Such recognition would prevent the criminalization of educational spaces and expand access to learning for children from marginalized backgrounds. This effort should avoid shifting state responsibility; instead, it should position community education as a complementary bridge while formal protections are strengthened.

Third, ASEAN must elevate the protection of migrant children as a regional priority. Despite existing instruments such as the ASEAN Declaration on the Rights of Children in the Context of Migration, implementation remains limited. A regional mechanism is needed to monitor state compliance, facilitate cross-border data coordination on migrant children, and develop guidelines for non-state actors providing education and protection services. Integrating community-based resilience models, such as Muhammadiyah's experience, into ASEAN best practices can improve the inclusiveness of regional responses.

Another implication that arises is the need for multi-stakeholder collaboration. This study shows that the protection of migrant children cannot be left solely to the country of origin or destination. The involvement of non-state

actors, international organizations, and local communities is vital in building sustainable resilience (UNICEF & International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2021). Muhammadiyah can once again, be positioned as *a bridge actor* that connects countries, migrant communities, and international institutions to create a protective ecosystem. It opens space to build a more participatory and inclusive ASEAN collaborative framework.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the phenomenon of Indonesian migrant children in Malaysia must be understood through the framework *of resilience-based human security*. The findings show that migrant children face structural vulnerabilities in the form of limited access to education, health services, and legal protection due to their undocumented status. These insecurities are experienced differently by boys and girls, reflecting gendered dynamics in household roles, exposure to exploitation, and opportunities for learning. Such findings affirm that child migration in the Indonesia–Malaysia corridor cannot be separated from questions of gender equality, social protection, and rights-based governance.

However, this study also shows the existence of adaptive capacities at the individual, community, and institutional levels. Muhammadiyah's role as a non-state actor has proven significant in providing alternative education through community schools that not only teach academic skills but also foster the social, religious, and cultural identities of migrant children. Integrating the concept of resilience with human security makes a significant theoretical contribution, as it broadens the academic perspective that previously emphasized vulnerability toward a more comprehensive analysis of adaptive capacity. Thus, this research provides new insights into the literature on child migration in Southeast Asia and enriches international relations studies by adopting a multidimensional approach to human security issues.

The implications of this research are both practical and policy-oriented. The results show that the Muhammadiyah community education model can be *a best practice* for protecting migrant children in areas with high mobility, including

within the ASEAN framework. In terms of policy, these findings encourage Indonesia and Malaysia to rely on civil society initiatives and strengthen their commitment to providing inclusive formal education. For theoretical development, the study enriches debates on migration, gender, and human security by demonstrating the value of combining resilience and rights-based perspectives in contexts of transnational mobility. Future research may expand this inquiry to comparative settings across ASEAN to deepen understanding of how community institutions can support migrant children under diverse policy environments. Through this approach, the study contributes a nuanced foundation for promoting more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable protections for migrant children in Southeast Asia.

REFERENCES

Ab Rahman, Norazida, Sivasampu, Sheamini, Mohamad Noh, Kamaliah, & Khoo, Ee Ming. (2016). Health profiles of foreigners attending primary care clinics in Malaysia. *BMC Health Services Research*, *16*(1), 197. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-016-1444-0

Acharya, A. (2021). ASEAN and regional order: Revisiting security community in Southeast Asia. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003139019

Ahmad, Yasmin, Abd Aziz, Mohd Kasturi Nor, Sulaiman, Suzana, Abdul Mutalib, Suhana, & Rose, Nurul Naimah. (2018). Cross Ethnic Friendship among Multi-ethnic Students and Teacher's Role in Supporting Cultural Diversity in School. *MATEC Web of Conferences*, *150*, 05057. https://doi.org/10.1051/matecconf/201815005057

Amiruddin, M. (2022). Islamic civil society and educational resilience: Muhammadiyah schools for Indonesian migrant children in Malaysia. *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, *16*(2), 311–332. https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2022.16.2.311-332

ASEAN. (2021). *ASEAN declaration on the rights of children in the context of migration*. Retrieved from ASEAN Secretariat website: https://asean.org

Azmi H. and Hassan, Z., N. and Awang. (2020). Education access and challenges for undocumented children in Sabah, Malaysia. *Journal of Nusantara Studies*, *5*(1), 50–65. https://doi.org/10.24200/jonus.vol5iss1pp50-65

Braun V., V. and Clarke. (2021). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. SAGE Publications.

Chandler, D. (2020). *Resilience in the Anthropocene: Governance and politics at the end of the world*. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429264284

Creswell C. N., J. W. and Poth. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Idris A., F. and Panimbang. (2022). Community-based education for Indonesian migrant children in Malaysia: Resilience amid precarity. *Journal of Southeast Asian Human Rights*, *6*(2), 45–68. https://doi.org/10.19184/jseahr.v6i2.32015

Idris F., I. and Panimbang. (2022). Migrant workers and children in Southeast Asia: Towards resilience-based approaches. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, *44*(3), 472–495. Retrieved from https://muse.jhu.edu/article/873456

International Labour Organization (ILO). (2022). *World report on child labour: Global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward*. Retrieved from International Labour Organization website: https://ilo.org

International Organization for Migration (IOM). (2020). *World migration report 2020*. Retrieved from IOM website: https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int

International Organization for Migration (IOM). (2022). *Annual report on migration in Southeast Asia*. Retrieved from IOM website: https://publications.iom.int

International Organization for Migration (IOM). (2023). *World migration report 2022*. Retrieved from IOM website: https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int

Joseph, J. (2018). Varieties of resilience: Studies in governmentality. *Critical Sociology*, *44*(2), 243–260. https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920516680334

KBRI Kuala Lumpur. (2022). *Laporan tahunan pendidikan anak migran Indonesia di Malaysia*.

Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia. (2021). *Laporan pengembangan Sekolah Indonesia Kota Kinabalu dan Community Learning Center*.

Kusuma J., Y. and Lee. (2021). Child migrants and social exclusion in Southeast Asia. *Journal of Migration Studies*, *5*(1), 55–72. https://doi.org/10.1111/jms.12560

Loganathan, Tharani, Rui, Deng, Ng, Chiu Wan, & Pocock, Nicola Suyin. (2019). Breaking down the barriers: Understanding migrant workers' access to healthcare in Malaysia. *PLOS ONE*, *14*(7), e0218669. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0218669

MacPherson, Stewart. (1989). The Convention on the Rights of the Child. *Social Policy & Administration*, *23*(1), 99–101. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9515.1989.tb00500.x

Masten, A. S. (2021). Resilience of children in disasters: A multisystem perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *72*(1), 228–252. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-072720-094032

Muhammadiyah. (2021). *Annual report of Muhammadiyah overseas education services: Case of Malaysia*. Lembaga Hubungan dan Kerjasama Internasional Muhammadiyah.

Muhammadiyah Education Board. (2022). *Laporan pendidikan komunitas Muhammadiyah di Malaysia*. PP Muhammadiyah.

Noveria A., M. and Raharto. (2021). Child migration and vulnerability in Indonesia–Malaysia corridors. *Journal of Population and Social Studies*, *29*(2), 150–166. Retrieved from https://so03.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/jpss/article/view/246992

Piper, N. (2021). Gendered migration governance: A feminist critique of the Global Compact for Migration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *47*(10), 2335–2351. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2020.1813018

Saarnik, Helen, Sindi, Ingrid, & Toros, Karmen. (2024). Experiences of Child Protection Removal Practices. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, *41*(5), 707–718. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-022-00911-y

San Jose, Benjamin A. (2015). Achieving human security for migrants: the limits of state policies and migration-development initiatives. *Bandung: Journal of the Global South*, *2*(1), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40728-015-0019-5

Sen, Amartya. (1999). Development as Freedom. In *Oxford: Oxford University Press* (p. 5). Retrieved from file:///D:/MASTER/C- JURNAL/Japan Foundations/Sen-intro.pdf.crdownload

Suárez-Orozco, C. (2021). Children of migration: Resilience, agency, and well-being. *Annual Review of Developmental Psychology*, *3*, 347–371. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-devpsych-121220-015759

Sugiyono. (2019). *Metode penelitian kualitatif, kuantitatif, dan R&D*. Alfabeta.

SUHAKAM. (2023). *Annual report on the human rights situation of migrants in Malaysia*.

Suharto, U. (2023). Muhammadiyah's role in supporting Indonesian migrant communities abroad. *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, *61*(1), 85–110. https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2023.61.1.85

Syafrudie, H. A., & Haryo, A. (2021). School readiness in supporting child-friendly schools reviewed from noise aspect of the classroom in a primary public school in the new normal era. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*. https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/1234/1/012345

Thahir, Putri Shafarina. (2024). Muhammadiyah Goes International? Challenges and Opportunities. *Jurnal Muhammadiyah Studies*, *9*(1), 47–67. https://doi.org/10.22219/jms.v9i1.36120

The ASEAN Secretariat. (2022). *ASEAN report on the protection of migrant workers*. Retrieved from ASEAN Secretariat website: https://asean.org

UNDP. (1994). *Human Development Report 1994: New dimensions of human security*. Oxford University Press.

UNDP. (2021). *Human security and the Sustainable Development Goals*. Retrieved from UNDP website: https://hdr.undp.org

UNESCO. (2021). *Ensuring education for migrant children in Southeast Asia*. Retrieved from UNESCO Publishing website: https://unesdoc.unesco.org

UNESCO. (2022). *Global education monitoring report 2022: Inclusion and education*. Retrieved from UNESCO Publishing website: https://unesdoc.unesco.org

Ungar, M. (2021). *Multisystemic Resilience* (Michael Ungar, ed.). https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190095888.001.0001

UNHCR. (2021). *Global trends: Forced displacement in 2020*. Retrieved from UNHCR website: https://www.unhcr.org/statistics

UNICEF. (2020). *Education and child protection for migrant children in Malaysia*. UNICEF Malaysia.

UNICEF. (2021). *Children out of school in Malaysia: Policy brief*. Retrieved from UNICEF Malaysia website: https://www.unicef.org/malaysia

UNICEF. (2023). *Child migration and protection*. Retrieved from UNICEF website: https://www.unicef.org/migration

UNICEF, & International Organization for Migration (IOM). (2021). *Access denied: Protecting education for migrant children in crisis contexts*. Retrieved from UNICEF website: https://unicef.org