

## Level of Well-Being among Migrants in Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

The true reason for migration is to seek for a better life. People who choose to migrate are motivated by economic intentions and the pursuit of well-being. Many research studies investigate the impact of migration focus on migrant workers only, not include the whole of migrants. This study aims to analyze whether migration has an impact on well-being in Indonesia, using both objective and subjective measurements. The sample unit of study is a person who was 22 years old or over in 2014, using longitudinal data of the Indonesian Family Life Survey. Objective well-being is measured by real per capita expenditures that reflect the differences in purchasing power in 2007 and 2014, while the subjective well-being is a self-rated assessment index of life satisfaction. The analytical method used is the logistics of panel data. The results show that migration significantly and positively affects well-being in Indonesia. It can be concluded that subjectively, migrants tend to have better well-being, and objectively, their purchasing power tends to be higher than that of non-migrants.

*Keywords:* IFLS, Indonesia, migration, objective well-being, subjective well-being

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### INTRODUCTION

A person who migrates seeks well-being, status, and affiliation (Jong & Fawcett, 1981). The decision to migrate is influenced by expectations of higher and more stable

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income to meet the needs of life and to have economic security in old age. The drive to improve one's life is more dominant than any other factor in decisions to migrate. According to Lipton (1980) and de Haan (1999), the incentive of most migrants is to acquire a better standard of living. A primary goal of people who move from their place of origin is to get a better livelihood for themselves and their families, regardless of whether one decides to migrate on one's own or is following family members (De Haan, 1999; Lipton, 1980).

Some other experts argue that a person's motivations to migrate are economic motives (Borjas et al., 2010; Ehrenberg, 2000; Lee, 1966; Speare & Harris, 1986; Todaro, 1980). Some migration theories suggest also that migration occurs because of wage gaps between rural and urban areas (Harris & Todaro, 1970; Lewis, 1954). This demonstrates the individuals' rational considerations in the expectation of getting higher wages by migrating (Todaro & Smith, 2006) and that migration will stop when there is no longer a wage gap between rural and urban areas.

Migration has been occurring in Indonesia for a long time. In the 1970 Population Census, more than 11.5% of Indonesia's population lived outside the region of their birth, and more than half of them were living in a province that was different from the province of their birth. This number increased rapidly by 2010, where 23.4 million (11.8%) people lived in a province different than their place of birth (lifetime migration) and 5.4 million people

(2.5%) lived in a province different from the province where they lived five years ago.

According to Sukamdi and Mujahid (2015), migration can occur due to various reasons such as employment, pursuing higher education, joining family or gaining access to better social services. Migration could also be part of a plan to return home after retiring from work. Previous research on migration in Indonesia used migration mostly as a dependent variable, except the study by Rangkuti (2009), which discussed the advantages of migrating by comparing wages before and after migration. Based on the data from the Inter-Census Population Survey (SUPAS), Sjaastad (1962) determined the factors that triggered migration in Indonesia were family reasons, such as marriage, followed by economic reasons. It has not been answered fully whether migration has an impact on improving the quality of life for migrants, because migrants are not just those who are looking for work, but also wives and children. In addition, migrants may move because of factors other than work, such as natural disasters or war. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to see the effect of migration on improving well-being in Indonesia.

## Literature Review

**Migration.** The term migration refers to population mobility over the political or administrative boundaries of an area to another village, sub-district, district, province, or country (Siegel & Swanson, 2004). In a broader sense, migration is a

change of permanent residence or a semi-permanent one (Lee, 1966). Bell et al. (2014) developed the Rogers-Castro theory of scheduled migration patterns shown in Figure 1 combined the theory of migration schedules with life transitions and compared their variations between countries. Based on the migration schedule theory, the productive age group of 15–49 years is the most mobile age group. The pattern of migration increases between the ages of 20–30 years, as individuals enter education in college and join the labor market. After age 30, the rate of migration will continue to decline along with events in life until the retirement age at age 50 years. Migration increases again at during age 50–58 years when people return home after retirement.

Borjas et al. (2010) formulated a theory of family migration, which stated that family migration would occur if the net profit for the family is positive, meaning that there was a benefit in the destination. Therefore, the optimal choice for some family members

is not necessarily the optimal choice for the whole family, and vice versa. This results in what is called a tied stayer and tied mover. Tied stayers are people who sacrifice better income opportunities elsewhere because their partner is better at their current location, while the tied mover is a person who moves with his partner despite the prospect of better employment at their current location.

**Well-being.** Sen (1987) in his book, “Development as Freedom” stated that well-being was a mental characteristic generated by pleasure and happiness. Alatartseva and Barysheva (2015) divided well-being into two aspects: objective and the subjective aspects. The objective aspect of well-being is defined as material well-being and quality of life which refer to the objective well-being. Meanwhile, the subjective well-being is defined as the internal experience of each individual. According to Alatartseva and Barysheva (2015), the objective aspect of well-being is the socio-economic aspect.

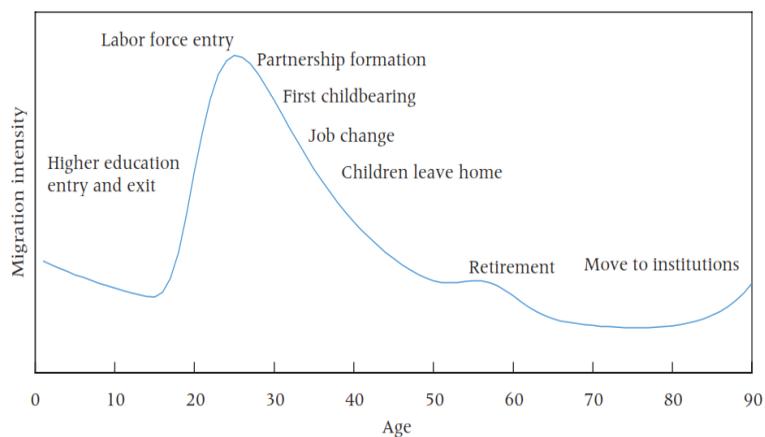


Figure 1. Profile of migration by age and transition of life (Bell et al., 2014)

This aspect is influenced by income level, living conditions, and education.

Bradshaw et al. (2011) measured subjective well being for children in UK by two dimensions: happiness and self esteem. Each of these dimensions of subjective well-being is assessed by a number of questions and a score is given to each response. A scale is created for each dimension by summing up the scores to each set of corresponding questions. The happiness scale ranges from 0-30 and the self-esteem scale ranges from 0-15. Thus, the higher the score, the better is the subjective well being on both scales.

Schueller and Seligman (2010) used two indicators of well-being, education and job attainment because these indicators became psychological, social, and physical capital in improving well-being. Jobs provide financial security and income generating opportunities, while education provides avenues for developing knowledge and getting better jobs.

Powdthavee (2006) stated that the commonly used indicator for analyzing living standards in Indonesia was an expenditure-based indicator of real household expenditure per capita per month. Furthermore, Powdthavee (2007) stated that per capita expenditure described more accurately economic status in the long run than income. This is because expenditure can better describe the ability of households to maintain their standard of living. Frankenberg et al. (1999) stated also that economic status in Indonesia was illustrated more often by tracking per capita consumption. Thereby, objective well-being is measured through the level of income, consumption patterns, and assets or wealth property owned (Osberg, 1985).

According to Chaudhury and Barman (2014), psychological well-being includes the perception of individuals in assessing their lives subjectively, while physical well-being is the ability to perform basic activities. These dimensions include lifestyle, nutritional coverage, and balance between body, mind, and spirit. Social well-being is the ability to interact in society. These dimensions include interpersonal interaction, social networking, and community support. Meanwhile spiritual well-being includes a vertical relationship that is related to the level of obedience to God, and a horizontal relationship that includes the relationship to the environment, others, and self.

Veenhoven (2012) stated that subjective well-being, or quality of life, was a synonym of the word happiness and happiness referred to the assessment of a person about his life, including cognitive assessment (life satisfaction) and assessment of affective (mood and emotions). A person is said to have high happiness if they are satisfied with their living conditions and have many positive emotional experiences. Well-being is the state or degree in which a person judges the quality of his life to be good (Kahn & Juster, 2002).

Landyanto et al. (2011) said that subjective well-being was an exchangeable perception between utility, happiness, life satisfaction, and wealth. Similarly, Nielsen et al. (2009) defined subjective well-being as life satisfaction that could be measured in seven domain areas: standard of living, individual health, achievement, personal relationships, security, community relations, and future security. According to Alartartseva and Barysheva (2015), the subjective well-

being is a moral and psychological aspect, so the level of subjective well-being depends on a person's respective perceptions. Therefore, subjective well-being is a measure of well-being that is based on individual perceptions in assessing the happiness and satisfaction of life.

**Migration and Well-being.** Jong and Fawcett (1981) classified the purpose of migration into seven conceptual categories, namely: (1) well-being (welfare or wealth) migration decisions are influenced by economic benefits, such as higher and stable income expectations that can meet primary and tertiary needs, including economic security (income security) in old age; (2) status migration is undertaken where there is expectation for better employment, education, and community status than in the previous residence; (3) comfort migration has the purpose of improving the dwelling, environment, and so on to improve one's comfort; (4) stimulation migration is motivated by a desire to engage in new activities, meet new communities, and become more active in the destination; (5) autonomy migration encourages freedom and economic independence, offering privacy and opportunity to be oneself; (6) affiliation migration may be influenced by family relationships at the destination, the desire to be in a new community, or to follow a spouse or family; (7) morality migration desire can be affected by religious worship, seeking a good influence for children, living a better life, and living in a better community.

According to Skeldon (2012), there is a strong relationship between migration and poverty because migration can be seen as a cause of poverty as well as a source of poverty. The higher the household income, the tendency to migrate will be smaller (De Jong, 2000). De Brauw and Harigaya (2007) said that households in Vietnam used migration to improve living standards during the 1990s. Using per capita consumption as a measure of well-being, they found that the per capita consumption of migrants increased after migration and poverty rates declined as much as three% over the previous year.

De Brauw et al. (2013) found that the per capita consumption of migrants in Ethiopia increased after migration. This study saw an increase in the frequency of meat consumption as an indicator of an increase in living standards in Ethiopia by migrants compared to non-migrants. Viewed by gender, they found that the benefits of migration were greater for male migrants than for women, although the benefits for women remained substantial. They concluded that the increase in internal migration had a major impact on improving living standards in Ethiopia and that the well-being of migrant workers increases after migration. In addition, the number of household members has a positive effect on the decision to migrate.

Previously, Beegle et al. (2011) conducted a study on the impact of migration on poverty and living standards in Tanzania using the consumption level approach. Their study indicated immense and powerful

migration impacts; migrants experienced a 36% higher consumption rate than those living in the village. The amount of transfer from migrants to household members is also relatively limited. They found that the movement of individuals to the region correlated with higher growth.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Data

The main data used in this research was panel data sourced from the Indonesian Family Life Survey (IFLS) in 2007 and 2014. IFLS has three types of information used in this study which are information on individual mobility, information on expenditure consumption, and information about subjective well-being. The analytical unit used in this study were individuals aged 22 years and over in 2014 who answered using the MG module of IFLS 2014. The analytical unit included those who migrated and those who did not migrate. The number of panel sample units from 2007 and 2014 IFLS data was 21,259 samples.

### Dependent Variable: Objective Well-being

The objective well-being variable in this research used the expenditure approach of average per capita consumption per month. For developing countries, the standard indicators for measuring material/objective well-being are consumption expenditures (Meyer & Sullivan, 2003). Per capita expenditure is a more accurate indicator of the state of economic status than income, according to Frankenberg et al. (1999), who

add further that this is because a person will tend to maintain the survival of his life's estimate, especially primary consumption such as clothing, food, and shelter by spending savings or borrowing money from others.

Per capita consumption expenditure was obtained by combining the data from Book 1 Chapter KS1 (food consumption) and KS2 (non-food consumption) and the Control Book on IFLS data. Consumption expenditure per capita in 2014 and 2007 were then calculated and the real value of per capita consumption 2014 was adjusted to the price in the base year of 2007. The trick is to deflate the price using consumer price index data. Next, the variable of objective well-being was established into two categories with the following conditions: (1) no rise, if the real consumption value per capita in 2014 is smaller or equal to 2007, and (2) increase, if the real consumption value per capita in 2014 is greater than in 2007.

### Dependent Variable: Subjective Well-being

Landyanto et al. (2011) stated that the terms well-being, utility, happiness, life satisfaction, and wealth were interchangeable and could be measured with answers to questions such as those raised in the IFLS. Veenhoven (as cited in Amir, 2015) reinforced this statement by stating that the word happiness was used to express everything that was good, and in this case became synonymous with subjective well-being or quality of life and the conditions that indicated individual and social well-being.

Nielsen et al. (2009) constructed the Personal Well-being Index (PWI) based on principal component analysis (PCA). They pointed out that the PWI comprised items that made up subjective well-being; they described the level of life satisfaction in seven domain areas, living standards, individual health, achievement, personal relationships, security, community relations, and future security. The question items that constitute subjective well-being are as follows:

Please imagine a six-step ladder where on the bottom (the first step) stand the poorest people, and on the highest step (the sixth step) stand the richest people. On which step are you today?

1. On which step do you expect to be five years from now?
2. Concerning your current family life, which of the following is true?
3. Concerning your current standard of living, which of the following is true?
4. Concerning your food consumption, which of the following is true?
5. Concerning your healthcare, which of the following is true?
6. Taken all things together how would you say things are these days?

The PCA method will generate five well-being quantities, which are then reduced to three prosperity categories, namely:

1. Low well-being: first and second quintiles covering 40% of individuals with the lowest subjective well-being scores.

2. Middle well-being: the third and fourth quintiles covering 40% of individuals with subjective well-being scores.
3. High well-being: based on the fifth quintile that includes 20% of individuals with the highest subjective well-being score.

Subsequently, the subjective well-being variable is formed into two categories with the following conditions:

1. No rise, if the prosperity category in 2014 is smaller or equal to 2007
2. Increase, if the prosperity category of 2014 is greater than in 2007

### Research Model

As mentioned earlier that this study aims to see the effect of migration on changes in the level of individual well-being; therefore, the formation of research dataset using variables changes for each independent variable (Allison, 2005). According to Allison (2015), to see changes in well-being between two survey times can be done in two ways, namely:

1. Using logistic equations for persons-years observations or panel data (xtlogit on Stata13)
2. Using binary logistic equations with independent variables with a different score between the two times

Allison (2015) stated two conditions must be met to be able to use the first method of which was, the dependent variable must be measured between different time events (at least two measures of occurrence). In this case, the well-being used in this study was

measured in 2007 and 2014, so the condition is met. The second condition is that the independent variables must change between survey times. The fixed effect model will not give a good effect on variables that do not change over time (time invariant), such as gender and tribe.

The dependent variable in this research is the change in well-being level of the panel individuals aged 22 years and above in year 2014, indicated as follows:

1.  $Y = 1$ , if well-being increased.
2.  $Y = 0$ , if well-being did not rise or decreased.

To see the effect of the change of status (migration) to increased well-being, the following model is used is as:

$$\text{logit } h(t_{t_{ij}}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \varepsilon \quad (1)$$

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The objects in this research were individuals aged 22 years and over in 2014 which were observed also in 2007. The univariate

analysis presented in Table 1 provides an overview of individual characteristics based on migration status and the level of well-being. Overall, the number of individual observations was 21,259 people consisting of 45.47% men and 54.53% women. As many as 4,590 people (21.6%) of them migrated or had a different residence between 2007 and 2014. Most of them were working and living in urban areas and most have an education level lower than elementary school.

Based on Table 1, there is a different pattern between objective and subjective well-being. As for objective well-being, 78.9% of the more prosperous individuals had an increase in real per capita consumption in 2014 compared to 2007; in other words, their purchasing power in 2014 was greater than in 2007. In contrast, in that group only 28.83% had a high subjective well-being perception.

Table 1  
*Distribution of respondents by selected variables*

Variable	Categories	Number of observation	Percentage
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Objective Well-being	Not rise	4.508	21.21
	Increase	16.751	78.79
Subjective Well-being	Not rise	15.130	71.17
	Increase	6.129	28.83
Migration Status	Non Migrant	16.669	78.41
	Migrant	4.590	21.59
Sex	Women	11.592	54.53
	Men	9.667	45.47

Table 1 (Continued)

Variable	Categories	Number of observation	Percentage
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Age Group	22-29	3.858	18.15
	30-49	1.227	52.81
	50-59	3.426	16.12
	60+	2.748	12.93
Education Level	Elementary school or Lower	8.651	40.69
	Junior High School	3.874	18.22
	Senior High School	5.890	27.71
	University	2.844	13.38
Marital Status	Not Married	1.802	8.48
	Ever Married	2.153	10.13
Employment Status	Married	17.304	81.4
	Not employed	4.590	21.59
Residence	Employed	16.669	78.41
	Rural	8.760	41.21
Archipelago	Urban	12.499	58.79
	Other	8.238	38.75
	Jawa-Bali	13.021	61.25
Total		21.259	100

Table 2 indicates the differences in the tendency of well-being to change based on the characteristics of individuals and regions were not much different from the results of the descriptive analysis. There was a difference in well-being trends between age groups. The higher age groups had a higher tendency for individuals to become more prosperous. These results are in line with the findings of Frey and Stutzer (2002), Blanchflower and Oswald (2004). Some of reasons behind this positive correlation are that older people have lower expectations and aspirations than younger people, older

people revise their goals and expectations toward things that are more likely to be achieved, and older people have learned how to reduce and overcome the negative things that affect their lives. In addition, emotional maturity that comes with age plays a part (Seligman, 2002). Tendencies of well-being differ also in groups of individuals based on education level. In objective well-being, the higher the level of education, the tendency to be more prosperous will decrease. It is generally seen, however, that individuals who had educational attainment of junior high school were more likely to increase

Table 2  
Results of logistic panel data regression (xtlogit)

Covariat	Objective Well-being				Subjective Well-being			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
(1)	OR	SE	OR	SE	OR	SE	OR	SE
Constant	0.541***	0.006	0.134***	0.006	0.139***	0.002	0.048***	0.003
Migration Status								
Migran	5.497***	0.122	7.963***	0.306	3.466***	0.122	3.401***	0.125
Age Group								
30-39			1.668***	0.056			1.263***	0.053
40-59			5.382***	0.192			1.803***	0.080
60 +			6.303***	0.291			1.805***	0.111
Education Level								
Junior High School			1.399***	0.045			1.317***	0.056
Senior High School			1.248***	0.037			1.535***	0.059
University			1.283***	0.049			1.707***	0.080
Marital Status								
Ever Married			1.142***	0.063			1.057	0.080
Married			1.121***	0.044			1.308***	0.068
Employment Status								
Employed			1.256***	0.033			1.121***	0.039
Residence								
Urban			1.124***	0.026			1.170***	0.036

Table 2 (Continued)

Covariat	Objective Well-being				Subjective Well-being			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	OR	SE	OR	SE	OR	SE	OR	SE
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Archipelago								
Jawa-Bali			0.954**	0.021			1.196***	0.036

Notes: \*\*\* Significance at  $\alpha = 0.01$ , \*\* Significance at  $\alpha = 0.05$ , \*Significance at  $\alpha = 0.1$

their well-being than individuals with lower than an elementary school education are. This means that in the period 2007–2014, those with educational attainment of junior high school and above tended to have higher purchasing power in 2014 than those who were not educated or had lower than elementary school educations.

From Models 2 and 4, it is seen that the smallest tendency of well-being is in the lower than elementary educational level. The higher the level of education, the higher the tendency to improve well-being. This is because education can increase one’s knowledge and increase the ability to get a better job (Schueller & Seligman, 2010). This is also in line with Eddington and Shuman (2005), who suggest that there is a significant relationship between education and happiness, because education affects a person’s social status. Eddington and Shuman (2005) add that the relationship between happiness and education may decline at higher levels of education, because higher education produces higher expectations and that if a highly educated person is unable to achieve those expectations then his happiness will decrease.

### CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of research and discussion in the previous section, it can be concluded that migration affects the level of well-being of individuals in Indonesia. The effect is significant on both the objective and subjective well-being, with the same pattern of influence between the two. Migration

positively affects both the objective well-being and subjective well-being. As mentioned, migration has a positive effect on objective well-being. This means real expenditure per capita of migrants in 2014 tended to increase when compared to real per capita consumption expenditure in 2007. In contrast, real per capita spending for non-migrants tended to decline in 2014. This demonstrates that migrants had greater income in 2014 than 2007, since expenditure per capita is used as a proxy for income. Objectively, therefore, migrants tend to be more prosperous than non-migrants are. Similarly, for subjective well-being, migration positively affects the well-being level. This means that the perceptions of migrants on the subjective measures of well-being in 2014 tended to increase when compared with 2007. Migrants tend to feel more improvements in their life satisfaction, happiness, material adequacy, and health in 2014 than in 2007. Thus, subjectively, migrants tend to be more prosperous than non-migrants are. The interaction of migration with the independent/control variables significantly affects the objective well-being in Indonesia. This means that migration affects other independent variables in influencing changes in per capita consumption levels in Indonesia. It can be concluded that the variation in the increase of real per capita consumption in the period 2007–2014 depended on the interaction between migration and educational attainment, employment status and residence. The interaction of migration with the independent/control variables also significantly affects subjective well-being, that is, the interaction between

migration with education attainment, marital status, employment status, residence, and archipelagic area. It can be concluded that the variation in individual perceptions of life satisfaction, happiness, material adequacy, and health in 2014 depended on the interaction between migration and gender, education level, marital status, residence, and archipelagic area.

### **Limitations**

This research is limited to the period 2007–2014, and all the individuals in 2007 were assumed to be non-migrants, even though in fact, there were migrants in 2007. In addition, this study does not describe all the determinants of migration and is limited to individual characteristics and region. Future research could use a longer data panel from the initial wave of the IFLS. The use of the CPI deflator cannot accommodate the differences in the purchasing power between regions. Therefore, the CPI deflator chosen for the estimation of the purchasing power of migrants in 2014 is the CPI of the regions where the migrants lived in 2014. In addition, the consumption expenditure per capita contains bias because it assumes equal consumption for every member of a household; it divides the total consumption by the number of family members. Per capita consumption, however, is thought to differ between age groups; this is called an equivalent scale (Bellu & Liberrati, 2005). For further research, the equivalent scale should be considered in calculating the per capita expenditure.

## Implications

Some policy recommendations that can be given related to the conclusions of this research. The results of the study showed that urban and rural areas have an impact on well-being achievement. This indicates that there is still a large gap between urban and rural areas. Therefore, the distribution of development becomes a key in improving the well-being of the population. The development of facilities and infrastructure in rural areas needs to be improved further. The results of the study show also a phenomenon that educational investment is still very important to the achievement of well-being. Therefore, development programs related to education should be continued, especially those related to education subsidies and 12-year compulsory education programs.

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