

Japan-Indonesia Cooperation in Dealing with the Labour Crisis in Japan

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ABSTRACT

Despite its successful economy, Japan is facing a labour shortage that threatens the country's economy. This shortage has led the Japanese government to seek solutions to meet its workforce's needs. In contrast, Indonesia, with its large population, is facing problems with labour market imbalances. In response to the problems, Japan began to establish labour cooperation with Indonesia to address Japan's labour crisis. Indonesia is currently the third-largest labour-sending country to Japan after Vietnam and the Philippines. This is supported by Indonesia's labour skills that meet the requirements of work in Japan. Moreover, Japan and Indonesia have a similar culture and manner that makes many Indonesian migrant workers interested in working in Japan, as well as the Japanese community, which easily accepts Indonesian workers in Japan. By utilising the concept of international relations through a qualitative method, a literature study is conducted by gathering information through reports, news articles, and journal articles. This research found that Japan-Indonesia cooperation in dealing with the labour crisis in Japan was carried out by revising the immigration policy by the Japanese government to make it easier for Indonesian workers to enter Japan, providing financial assistance and training to Indonesian workers, and establishing a labour cooperation scheme, namely JIEPA and SSW, between Japan and Indonesia. Furthermore, this study found that there is a technical internship cooperation programme between two countries that is harmful to both Japan and Indonesia.

Keywords: International Cooperation, Japan, Indonesia, Labour

INTRODUCTION

In a country's economy, labour plays a very important role in the welfare and economic growth of the country. Labour is the total number of people who are in working age (15–64 years old) and can work to produce goods or services that have economic value that can be useful for the needs of themselves and society. Therefore, labour is one of the most important factors of production, in addition to natural resources, capital, and technology. The existence of labour problems will affect new problems in the economic and non-economic fields (Rizal et al., 2018). In developed countries, some examples of this labour crisis tend to be a lack of labour due to people's refusal to marry and have children. While in developing countries, some examples of labour issues include low labour quality, unequal distribution of labour, and imbalances in the labour market.

In this case, behind its successful economy, Japan is a country that is facing a labour crisis in the form of a shortage of labour. In fact, in terms of economic growth, Japan is one of the countries with the highest economic growth rate in the world. Japan's economic growth has been significantly influenced by developments in the industrial sector, especially in the electronic and automotive sectors (Mangunsong, 2017). One of the main problems facing Japan as a developed country is its low

birth rate. Currently, Japan's population is ageing, and the young group is shrinking, which can further affect the development of Japan (Lufkin, 2018). Without productive workforces with high quality and sufficient numbers, the country is threatened to experience regression in various sectors (Dwizarati, 2021).

Meanwhile, Indonesia is the fourth most populous country in the world, with a population of 267 million people and an average growth rate of 1.00% per year (CNN, 2022). Indonesia no longer experiences the problem of a labour shortage, but on the contrary, the problem faced is the labour market imbalances, causing high unemployment in Indonesia. Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics of Indonesia states that the number of unemployed people in Indonesia as of August 2020 increased by 1.84% to 7.07%. In general, Indonesia's labour problems are related to limited economic absorption compared to the number of workers, which continues to increase rapidly (Wijayanto & Ode, 2019).

In response to these problems, Japan began to look for steps to overcome the labour crisis in its country. In this effort, Japan cooperates with several countries, including Indonesia, to meet the needs of workers in the country. As of December 2021, the number of Indonesian workers with

Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) status in Japan reached 3,889 and ranked third below Vietnam and the Philippines. According to Masafumi Ishii, the Japanese Ambassador to Indonesia, Japan has its reasons for recruiting workers from Indonesia. One of them is due to the great potential of the Indonesian workers as well as the growth of the Indonesian economy (Pratama, 2019). Meanwhile, the Directorate General of Manpower Placement Development and Job Opportunity Expansion, Maruli Hasolon, explained that one of the reasons Japan chooses Indonesian workers is because of their hardworking nature. In addition, with most of Indonesia's population working in agriculture, fisheries, and industrial processing, it is very suitable for the job sector needed by Japan (Kusnandar, 2022).

In this cooperation, Japan requires certain qualifications, such as education level, skill certification, work experience, and Japanese language skills, for Indonesian workers who will work in Japan (Dea, 2022). In this case, Japan also plays a major role in providing technical and skills training to prepare migrant workers who will be sent to Japan. This includes training in sectors such as technology, manufacturing, and automotive. Thus, this cooperation helps improve the qualifications and skills of Indonesian workers, which in turn increases their competitiveness in the global labour market. Collaborative relations in employment can also help maintain the stability of bilateral relations between Indonesia and Japan. With mutually beneficial cooperation, both countries have an incentive to maintain good relations (JICA, 2018).

With high population growth, Indonesia has a great opportunity to send a lot of trained workers to Japan. Moreover, the Indonesian government is trying to improve the quality of human resources for the Indonesian people. Currently, the number of Indonesian workers in Japan is increasing every year. This is inseparable from Japan's efforts to build labour cooperation with Indonesia, which brings its workforce to Japan to overcome the problem of the labour crisis in the country.

LITERATURE REVIEW

(1) Previous Studies

Mayang Terapulina Br Karo, Ihsan Hikmatullah, Maudyta Dwi Puteri, Qotrun Nada Aulia, and Nur Safa Shafira explained in the journal "The Shoushika Phenomenon: Japanese Government Policy Analyst in the Era of Shinzo Abe's Leadership" that the Shoushika phenomenon was an economic setback. Japan's young population, with the number of births continuing to decline along with the rapid growth of Japan's elderly population (Karo et al., 2021). This decline in the young population has a major impact on Japan's economic and security sectors due to the lack of workers of productive age to fill the job gap in Japan. In this research, the author focuses on Shinzo Abe's policy, namely Women omics, which involves more women in the

workforce. However, this policy creates new problems with the mindset of Japanese society, which prioritises careers over having children for women. The limitation of this research is that the author has not explained the policies that can effectively overcome the problem of a shortage of workers due to low birth rates in Japan.

Meanwhile, regarding the employment situation in Indonesia, Hendra Wijayanto and Sekar Ode explained in the journal "Dynamics of Employment and Unemployment Problems in Indonesia" that the high unemployment rate in Indonesia really needs to be reduced by creating jobs with the aim of increasing and accelerating the country's economic growth (Wijayanto & Ode, 2019). In this case, creating a labour market is the main key to overcoming the employment crisis in Indonesia. In this case, the author is guided by this research to apply the description in the research that the creation of a labour market is the main key to overcoming the employment crisis in Indonesia. Apart from that, the author uses this research as a basis for illustrating that Japan-Indonesia cooperation in the field of employment can create employment opportunities for Indonesian workers. By sending Indonesian workers to Japan, these workers will get jobs and help meet the need for workers in Japan to maintain the country's economy (Wijayanto & Ode, 2019).

(2) Theoretical Framework

International Cooperation

International cooperation is a form of relationship between countries with the aim of meeting the needs of their people and for the benefit of all countries in the world. In an international society, people will meet various national interests from various countries and nations that cannot be fulfilled in their own countries. The existence of this cooperation is one of the efforts of countries to stand up for their common interests and a manifestation of the condition of societies that are interdependent on each other. International cooperation can include cooperation in the social, political, economic, defence, cultural, and security fields, guided by the foreign policy of each country. According to K.J. Holsti (1998), international cooperation can be defined as the view that two or more interests, values, or goals meet each other and can produce something, are promoted or fulfilled by all parties at once, the view or expectation of a country that policies decided by other countries will help that country to achieve its interests and values, agreements or certain matters between two or more countries in order to take advantage of a common interest or conflict of interest, official or unofficial rules regarding future transactions conducted to enforce agreements and transactions between countries to fulfil their agreement (Holsti, 1998).

A country cannot survive in the international society without establishing cooperation with other countries or

parties. The benchmark for the success of an international cooperation is based on the extent of mutual benefits obtained through the cooperation (Sulistiyana, 2019). The purpose of international cooperation by a country is to meet national interests that are not owned by the country. Meanwhile, the country needs to fight for its national interests abroad. In addition, international cooperation has the main objective of improving common welfare. Because of international cooperation, the relations that are built will be able to accelerate the improvement of welfare and solve problems between these countries (Holsti, 1998). K.J. Holsti (1998) in *International Politics, A Framework for Analysis*, also argues that “International relations may refer to all forms of interaction between the members of separate societies, whether sponsored by the government or not, the study of international relations would include the analysis of foreign policies or political processes between the nations, however, with its interest in all facets of relations between distinct societies, it would include as well studies or international trade, transportation, communication, and the development of international values and ethics”.

This study focuses on international cooperation between Japan and Indonesia in the labour sector. Related to the labour crisis, the Japanese government is trying to overcome this problem through efforts to change immigration policies that regulate foreign workers, cooperate with Indonesia, and provide financial assistance and training to attract Indonesian workers to work in Japan.

METHOD

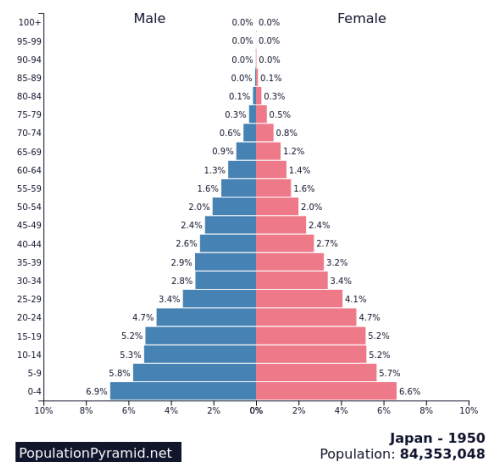
The authors use the qualitative method in this research as a data gathering process to produce a more comprehensive study of JIEPA (Japan-Indonesia Economic Partnership Agreement), SSW (Specified Skilled Workers), and TITP (Technical Intern Training Program) in 2019 to 2022 as the Japan-Indonesia labour cooperation. In this study, library research is used to collect data through the official websites of the Ministry of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia and the Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Agency, journal articles, credible news sites, books, and other related documents, as well as through semi-structured interviews with Indonesian migrant workers in Japan and the head of a migrant worker training institute in Indonesia.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Labour Phenomenon in Japan

Japan is known as one of the countries in Asia with the largest and most developed economies in the world, with various leading economic sectors such as the automotive industry, electronics, and pharmaceuticals. Various brands of Japanese products, such as Toyota, Fujifilm, Panasonic, and Sony, have been known and trusted by people around the world. In addition, Japan is also known as an innovative and creative country and has a high spirit of work. In this

case, the phenomenon of the labour crisis in Japan, which then had an impact on the country's economy, began with the development of employment in Japan after World War II. At that time, many Japanese civilians and military personnel died as a result of the war, and Japan experienced a drastic decline in population at that time (Harun et al., 2022). Beginning with this problem, the Japanese government ordered an increase in fertility rates in Japan in a short time (Dwizarati, 2021). After the war, civil society began to feel safe, and people decided to have families and children, which led to an increase in the birth rate in Japan in the 1970s. The existence of this condition succeeded in restoring the stability of the Japanese state with a phenomenon called the Baby Boom, which is a surge in a country's fertility rate that increased drastically in a very short period. From 1947 to 1949, the number of births in Japan reached 2.6 million each year. The stability of this birth rate then contributes to the stability of state income and improves the welfare of the population. Japan's condition gradually normalises, and the economy is increasing due to the large number of young workers (Harun et al., 2022).



Source: Population Pyramid (PopulationPyramid, 2022)

Figure 1. Japan Population Pyramid 1950

However, over time, the Baby Boom phenomenon has caused serious problems for Japan, such as the food crisis, increased student capacity in each school, and the number of generations of the Baby Boom generation who hold low-level employee positions in various companies. Although, there is a positive impact to this situation, the occurrence of the Bubble Economy, has increased the need for life and produced stable company conditions. With the increasing needs of the Japanese market, this also increases the Japanese economy drastically. But this situation also causes problems as the Baby Boom generation enters old age and, together completes their work in the companies where they work and retires en masse. This causes companies to incur large amounts in pension costs at the

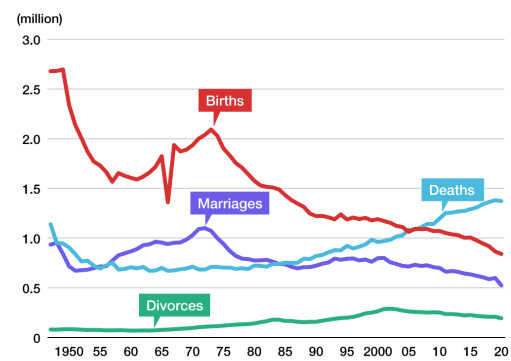
same time. The Japanese economy was again affected by this phenomenon, moreover, with the labour shortage that occurred in almost all company sectors (Harun et al., 2022).

In recent decades, Japan has faced the challenge of labour shortages or employment crises. This is an extension of the problem of Japan's significant demographic changes, where there is a decline in the number of births and a rapidly growing elderly population. As a result, Japan's demographic structure shows the condition of an ageing society, or *koreika shakai*. The low birth rate in Japan has long been in the spotlight of demographic observers as well as mass media both in Japan and abroad. Since population growth will only occur if birth rates are higher than death rates (Widiandari, 2016). Furthermore, some of the factors that affect the labour crisis in Japan are:

1. Low Birth Rate

In 2019, Japan was a developed country with a GDP of USD 5.123 trillion. However, Japan's economy continues to be hampered by a decline in the birth rate, where according to the IMF (International Monetary Fund), there will be a decline in average GDP growth of 1% over the next three decades (Walia, 2019). The phenomenon of declining birth rates has occurred in Japan since 1975, which was then known as *Shoushika*, which is a condition when the number of births decreases, meaning that between one generation and the next, one loses the replacement population (Widiandari, 2016). In 2020, there were approximately 841.000 births in Japan, which is a decrease of 24.000 from the previous year (Nippon Communications Foundation, 2020). The low birth rate in Japan is influenced by the younger generation, who tend to be individualists and prioritise their interests to live a pleasant life without the need to bear great responsibilities and the high cost of living that comes with owning and taking care of children (Widiandari, 2016).

The growing number of young people in Japan who refuse to marry or have children has led to a sex recession. According to a Japanese government report in 2022, around 24.4% of women in their 30s and 26.5% of men in the same age group have no desire to marry. In their 20s, 14% of women and 19% of men also have similar plans not to marry. The women surveyed said they avoided marriage because they wanted to enjoy freedom, pursue fulfilling careers, and not be burdened by traditional housewives. While the group of men also stated that they wanted to enjoy personal freedom, many of them had concerns over work and could not earn enough money to support their families (Ryall, 2022).

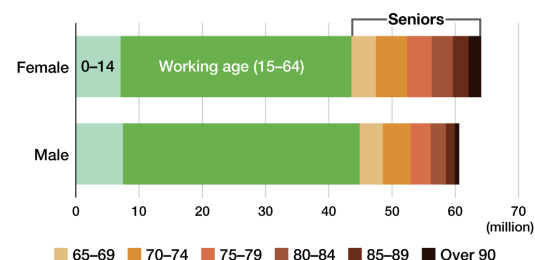


Source: Nippon Communications Foundation
(Nippon Communications Foundation, 2020)

Figure 2. Marriage and Birth Rates in Japan

2. High number of elderly generations

According to data from Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, as of September 15, 2022, the total population in Japan decreased by 82.000 compared to the previous year. But at the same time, the number of elderly people aged 65 years and over in the country reached 36.27 million, an increase of 60.000 with a percentage of 0.03% compared to last year and reached the highest record in the world (Nippon Communications Foundation, 2022). Based on government data released in July 2020, Japan has a high life expectancy; the life expectancy for women in Japan is 87.45 years, while men have a life expectancy of 81.41 years (Rosadi, 2022). According to the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare of Japan, more than 90.000 Japanese citizens are over 100 years old, the highest number in 52 years. The high life expectancy in Japan is influenced by medical facilities and health insurance for all its citizens that are borne by the state. The country also has a system to conduct routine health checks once a year to detect diseases or disorders early (Berlianto, 2022).



Source: NCF (Nippon Communications Foundation, 2022)

Figure 3. Population in Japan by Age Group

Within 10 years, from 2010 to 2020, Japan gradually experienced a population crisis in which there was a larger elderly population (senior citizens) than the

population of productive-age people. This elderly population has again caused problems in Japan. One of the main impacts of this problem is that Japan is experiencing a shortage of productive-age workers, which means it has to import productive-age workers from other countries. (Lu'lu, 2020). To deal with this problem, the Japanese government created the Elderly Welfare Law (*Roujin Fukushi Hou*) by providing labour policy regulations for the elderly by limiting the working age to 70 from the initial age limit of 65. This policy is implemented in the context of welfare because of the tendency of the elderly who are healthy and independent and live alone to be happier and more productive in how they spend their daily time (Dwizarati, 2021). To date, 50.3% of people aged 65 to 69 in Japan still have jobs. Since April 2021, a number of companies have been asked to keep workers on the wage list for up to 70 years if the worker still wants to work (Rosadi, 2022). The Japanese government also implements an elderly emigration programme abroad, one of which is to Indonesia as a destination country for the elderly to rest (Dwizarati, 2021).

3. Work Pressure on Japanese Society

Along with the times, there was a change in Japanese society, which transformed from an agrarian society into an industrial society. Japan experienced massive urbanisation starting in the 1960s. This also causes villages to be threatened with loss due to the lack of a young population. This high urbanisation causes abandoned rural areas to find it difficult to develop their potential. Meanwhile, in urban areas, employment that is increasingly contested by urbanising workers forces fierce competition so that working hours are tighter, which also results in a decrease in the birth rate (Nursari & Fitri, 2017).

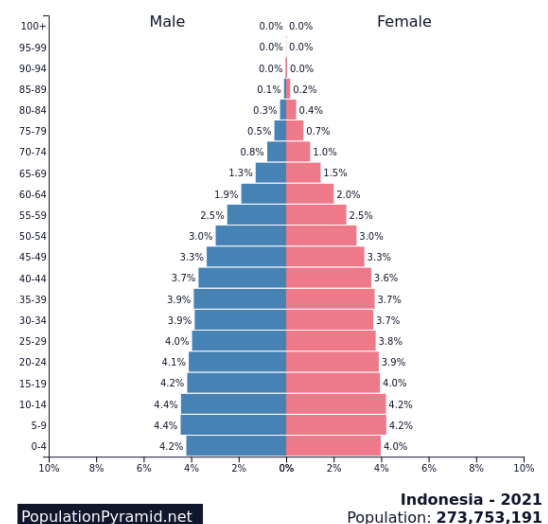
In addition, Japan is known for its high cultural ethos and its hard work. The character of this society has a positive effect on the progress of the country but also raises a negative effect known as *karoshi* (Firmansyah, 2019). Currently, Japan's ageing population has contributed to the lack of a young workforce, which has caused the workload to also get higher. The average employee in Japan works more than 60 hours a week and very rarely takes a day off. The condition makes employees stressed, depressed, and exhausted. From this phenomenon came the term *karoshi*, which means death due to work fatigue. In this case, the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare recognises two types of *karoshi*, death due to cardiovascular disease related to work fatigue and suicide due to work-related mental stress (Setiawan, 2016). According to research by the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare, in 2015, there were 1.456 cases of *karoshi*. The workers

who are vulnerable to *karoshi* are people who work in engineering, industrial workers, health workers, social services, and also transportation employees (Firmansyah, 2019).

In response to this issue, some companies in Tokyo began to shut down the electricity at seven o'clock in the evening to prevent workers from working overtime in the office. The Japanese government also issued compensation sets for the families of victims who died due to *karoshi* (Firmansyah, 2019). In addition, the government also issued a Premium Friday policy that requires companies to be able to send their workers home every Friday at 3 p.m. at the end of each month. Workers are also given the right to take 20 days of leave every year, although almost 35% of workers in Japan have not taken advantage of this entitlement. This strategy has quite an impact on decreasing the number of *karoshi*, even though the number is insignificant (Alicia, 2018).

4. Low Migration Rate

The low migration in Japan is caused by cultural factors, where there is an assumption that migration can be a threat to national identity and state security



(Dwizarati, 2021). In addition, Japanese people have

Figure 4. Indonesia Population Pyramid 2021

concerns about job losses, cultural disruptions, and fears of increasing crime in a country known for its low crime rate (Lufkin, 2018). Japanese society strongly maintains a strong perception of ethnic and cultural homogeneity, where they do not easily allow foreign cultures from immigrants to enter Japan. This condition affected by Japan's past was due to the actions of its allies, the United States, which dominated and controlled the country and made Japan

have a strict immigration policy. Japan, which also experienced a recession, also influenced the country's actions in limiting the acceptance of immigrants (Dwizarati, 2021).

With the main strength of the Japanese economy located in the manufacturing industry, Japan requires an abundant number of human resources as a workforce and driver of the country's economy. Currently, the labour force participation rate in Japan was recorded at 62.8% in October 2022; this record is down from the previous month of 63.0% in September 2022. To address this labour crisis, Shinzo Abe has tried to promote more elderly workers as well as women into the workforce in what is referred to as the Womenomics policy. Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno has also promised comprehensive measures to encourage more marriages and births. Since 2018, several local governments in Japan have provided marriage fund subsidies for young couples, financial support for pregnancy programme needs, maternity fund benefits, child support funds, maternity leave, and childcare, in addition to the addition of childcare facilities. But this policy has not done enough to address the lack of manpower to prop up the economy in the country (Ayu, 2021).

Labour Phenomenon in Indonesia

Indonesia is a country with a high population rate. The country also has a lot of young people, as about half of Indonesia's total population is under 30 years old. With these two factors, Indonesia is a country with a large labour force. As an agricultural country, most of Indonesia's population works in the agricultural and fishing sectors. This number represents 29.96% of the total working population. The business field that absorbs the next largest workforce is the large trade and retail sector, which has 25.8 million workers, followed by the process industry sector with 18.67 million workers (Kusnandar, 2022).

Based on the Central Bureau of Statistics of Indonesia data from February 2022, the number of people in the labour force in Indonesia reached 144.01 million. Of these, 135.61 million are employed, and 8.4 million are unemployed (CNN Indonesia, 2021). The labour group has a very important role in its success in national development. The more qualified and innovative the existing workforce, it will be directly proportional to the acceleration of development. With a population of productive age (15-64 years old) that is more than the non-productive age (0-65 years old and over) owned by Indonesia, the country is currently experiencing a demographic bonus phase with a peak in 2030, when the number of people aged 15-64 years reaches 70.7%, or approximately 190 million people, of the total population of Indonesia (Gamas, 2021)

Source: Population Pyramid (PopulationPyramid, 2021)

Demographic bonuses have very significant benefits, as the abundance of a productive-age population will be able to change the country's economy. The demographic bonus is also a strategic opportunity for Indonesia to accelerate development with the support of abundant productive-age human resources. To benefit from this demographic bonus, Indonesia must be able to improve the quality and quantity of public services. The working-age population must be in prime condition, which means healthy, intelligent, and productive. But behind the great benefits of this demographic bonus, this phenomenon also carries a high risk if the country is not able to manage it properly. Of the 144 million people of working age in the labour force, about 7 million are unemployed, and about 65% of workers are in the informal sector. This high unemployment rate will have an impact on various social problems. The economic costs that must be incurred by the government to overcome these social problems are very high, and it is difficult to measure the level of effectiveness and efficiency (Gamas, 2021).

According to Nazaruddin Malik (2016), in his book "Dinamika Pasar Tenaga Kerja Indonesia", explained that in general, Indonesia's labour problems are related to limited economic absorption compared to the number of workforces in the country, which continues to increase rapidly from year to year. The acceleration of labour force growth is not accompanied by accelerated employment growth. The population and workforce numbers in Indonesia always experience a significant acceleration, while the rate of new job growth is considered quite slow (Welianto, 2022). The problem of expanding employment opportunities in Indonesia can also be related to the problem of worker productivity. The demographic bonus that brings great opportunities for Indonesia's growth has not been supported by the quality of its human resources. In Indonesia itself, labour productivity is relatively low due to the low level of education possessed and the lack of skills some people possess. The phenomenon that occurs is that these workers are absorbed into informal and irregular jobs. This low productivity is caused by the weak quality of teaching standards, the poor character of prospective workers, the low quality of labour, and the lack of jobs in accordance with the field of education (CNN Indonesia, 2021).

Currently, Indonesian workers are in great demand by Japanese companies because most Indonesian people who work in the agriculture, animal husbandry, and industrial processing sectors have skills that are ready to be deployed according to the field of work (Kusnandar, 2022). In addition, the two countries have similar civilizations and cultures, such as the similarity of a hardworking nature, a high work ethic, being skilled and courteous, and having a culture of respecting older people (Pradipta, 2022). But besides that, Indonesian workers tend to be preferred because they have an obedient and gentle nature. This is

used by Japan to be channelled as a nurse and care worker workforce who work to care for patients and the elderly, as well as in the 3K job sector, which is currently avoided and abandoned by the younger generation in Japan. Indonesian workers are also seen as lacking understanding and awareness of labour law protections when compared to workers from other countries such as the Philippines. With this character, Indonesia still must further improve the quality of its human resources through various character and skill training for its workforce so that it can compete with workers from other countries that are superior in terms of numbers, such as Vietnam and the Philippines (Dewajani, 2023).

Japan's Immigration Policy Revision

The existence of international cooperation arises because of conditions that require each other to achieve national goals and interests that benefit both parties. In this case, Japan is experiencing a labour crisis, namely, labour shortages. As a country that suffered defeat in World War II and experienced the politics of isolation, Japan is a country that is sensitive to the influence and arrival of foreign immigrants. But at present, domestic policies alone are not enough to solve the problem of labour shortages in the country. Japan needs support from other countries to be able to overcome the problem.

Until then, Japan began to revise its immigration policy in 1989 by issuing an ICA (Immigration Control Act) amendment that allowed family-based visas and for high-skilled workers with a side door policy that allowed companies to hire foreign workers with trainee status. Until December 8, 2018, Japan again revised its Immigration and Refugee Control Law, which applies as of April 1, 2019. With this revision of immigration policy, Japan has further put aside decades of differences in immigration regarding semi-skilled labour with certain skills, where previously Japan only accepted foreign workers in professional or technical fields. This is done with the great hope of bringing in semi-skilled foreign workers to fill the labour market gap in the conditions of an ageing society in Japan (Milly, 2020). Foreign workers will get the same wages, rights, obligations, and responsibilities as Japanese workers, such as leave and benefits. In this policy, the Japanese government added two categories of work visas for foreign workers, namely, Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) or *Tokutei Ginou* types 1 and 2. These two types consist of skilled workers, or SSW type 1, and expert workers, or SSW type 2 (Hamaguchi, 2019).

Visa type 1 regulates 14 types of industries, namely: care workers and carers; building cleaning management; machine parts and tooling; industrial machinery industry; electric, electronics, and information industries; construction industry; shipbuilding and ship machinery industry; automobile repair and maintenance; aviation industry; accommodation industry; agriculture; fishery and

aquaculture; manufacture of food and beverages; and food service industry (Ryall, 2022). Workers with visa type 1 status of residence can be directly placed in the field without any trainee process or special training. Where the worker can directly engage in the work at the expected level. In general, this type of visa is intended for workers with limited or semi-skilled skills. Workers with this visa status can live and work in Japan for up to five years with a period of stay that is renewed every year, every six months, or every four months according to the ability of the workforce and are not allowed to bring family members to Japan (English Lawyers Japan, 2022).

Furthermore, workers with type 2 status of residence visas are highly skilled foreign workers who are able to supervise and carry out duties at the managerial or supervisory level. With this task, workers at this level require a more advanced professional or technical background compared to workers with type 1 residence status, so recruiting companies no longer need to select prospective workers. In addition, workers with Type 2 status of residence have no restrictions on renewing their stay many times and are allowed to bring their family members to be able to live in Japan (English Lawyers Japan, 2022).

Japan-Indonesia Labour Cooperation Scheme

With the employment phenomenon in both countries, Japan and Indonesia then carried out labour cooperation to transfer Indonesian workers to Japan. This international cooperation is not only beneficial for the Japanese side; as a country that has a lot of human resources that need jobs, promoting Indonesian youth to work in Japan is considered a situation that is also beneficial for Indonesia. Currently, there are many Indonesian workers who have a great interest in working in Japan due to the high salary compared to jobs in Indonesia with the same profession, as well as Japanese cultural factors that value workers more (Dewajani, 2023). Moreover, with most of the Indonesian youth having a positive perception of Japan, they view the country as a developed country that is disciplined and famous for technological advances and the quality of industrial products it produces at affordable prices (Jatmika, 2018). From this perception, they hope to be able to gain work experience, cultural diversity, knowledge, and emulate the performance of people in these developed countries (Dewajani, 2023).

Previously, there was a cooperation in the TITP programme, which is an internship system (trainee) with a three-year work contract through a selection process at the Ministry of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia, to meet the needs of workers instantly in Japan and transfer knowledge to the workers country. These TITP participants were unable to settle and pursue a career in Japan as a consequence of their status. In the end, the system that oversees foreign workers becomes ineffective

when they do not have certainty about job prospects, which has an impact on salaries that are inappropriate for the work done (Haryatno, 2020). The TITP programme also raises new problems that are feared to damage diplomatic relations between Japan and Indonesia. One of the problems faced is the large number of workers who commit fraud in the job registration system, either by falsifying personal documents or by running away after the training programme. (Hutami, 2022). TITP also faced problems in proclaiming unfair business practices, charging high fees, and exploiting workers. This occurs especially in quiet and private-to-private placements. In 2021, HRWG (Human Rights Working Group) urged Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga to renegotiate the TITP internship scheme, considering the many problems in both the recruitment process and the implementation of the programme (HRWG, 2021).

Along with this, seeing the many problems with the internship programme, or TITP, many Indonesian migrant workers choose to work in Japan without going through the internship route. People prefer going to Japan through other labour cooperation schemes between these two countries that have more clear legal protection (Dewi, 2022).

1. Japan-Indonesia Economic Partnership Agreement (JIEPA)

JIEPA (Japan-Indonesia Economic Partnership Agreement) is an agreement regarding the existence of an economic partnership between Japan and Indonesia based on the principles of an EPA (Economic Partnership Agreement). This agreement was signed by the heads of state of Indonesia and Japan, Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, on August 20, 2007, in Jakarta and took effect on July 1, 2008. JIEPA is a form of free trade agreement (FTA) with a government-to-government scheme within the framework of economic cooperation agreements. JIEPA is based on three main pillars: trade liberalisation, investment facilitation, and capacity building aimed at increasing cross-border goods flows, investment and service flows, and labour movement in both countries (Kementerian Perdagangan, 2018).

JIEPA does not only include liberalisation of trade in goods and services as stated; that is also implemented through FTAs (Sulistiyana, 2019). However, this JIEPA also includes a comprehensive economic agenda, one of which is related to increasing worker migration (movement of natural persons), with the Ministry of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia as the leading sector in the agenda sub-committee (Baheramsyah, 2022). Through the cooperation sector of the movement of natural persons, the Japanese

government allows qualified nurse (*kangoshi*) candidates and certified care worker (*kaigofukushishi*) candidates who have met certain requirements to fill the health service sectors in Japan (Sulistiyana, 2019).

The background of the JIEPA agreement, especially in terms of acceptance of nurses and care workers, is due to the anticipation of the high need for health care workers with the ageing population and increasing life expectancy in Japan. For nurses, they will be placed to work in hospitals or nursing homes. While most care workers work in orphanages more to help with ADL (acts of daily living), such as eating, bathing, and toileting, and improve the quality of life of patients, the elderly, or people with special needs (BP2MI, 2020). This JIEPA partnership agreement is one of the migration laws that opens Japan as a country to be visited by migrant nurses. In this case, the visa status to be granted is Nurse and Certified Care Worker Candidate under the EPA (Economic Partnership Agreement) (Khairunnisa, 2021).

In Indonesia itself, the government agency responsible for recruiting and sending care workers and nursing candidates to Japan is BP2MI (*Badan Pelindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia*), also known as the Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Agency, while on the Japanese side it is represented by the JICWELS (Japan International Corporation of Welfare Services) government agency (Khairunnisa, 2021). BP2MI and JICWELS, as the only coordinating institutions that accept prospective nurses and care workers under this JIEPA agreement in 2020, continue cooperation in the placement of Indonesian workers through the signing of an MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) on the Deployment and Acceptance of Indonesian Candidates for *Kangoshi*, Indonesian Candidates for *Kaigofukushishi*, and Indonesian *Kangoshi* and Indonesian *Kaigofukushishi* (BP2MI, 2020).

In the recruitment process, nurses and Indonesian care workers must meet several requirements that have been set. To be able to become nurses and care workers through this cooperation scheme, there are no fees for visas, flight tickets, Japanese language training, housing, or consumption during Japanese language learning. The cost of medical check-ups, visa applications, and flight tickets will be borne by the Japanese government for candidates who pass and depart for Japan. Meanwhile, the cost of nursing ability will be financed by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, and the cost of pre-departure orientation is borne by BP2MI (BP2MI, 2021).

Although labour candidates are skilled workers with a nursing background, they are required to attend

training run by institutions approved by JICWELS until they can then work in hospitals or other care facilities. The workers will receive pre-training in the Japanese language in Indonesia as well as language training in Japan for six months each. The pre-arrival Japanese language education training programme provided by the Japan Foundation institution is positioned as training to maximise the efficiency of language training that will later be obtained in Japan (Japan Foundation, 2018).

During language training in Japan, candidates will live in dormitories with training costs, study facilities, and food consumption three times a day borne by the Japanese government and get an allowance of USD 10 per person per day (BP2MI, 2021). Japanese language training while in Japan will be centred at the Association for Overseas Technical and Sustainable Partnerships (AOTS). In addition to receiving Japanese language training upon arrival in Japan, workers will also receive nursing training first. The curriculum in training aims to bridge the gap between labour and Japanese culture and norms. After the training, candidates are expected to take the state exam to become registered nurses and certified care workers (Lan, 2018).

To be able to pass the state exam to get a nurse and care worker licence, there is also tutoring support, exam practise, and periodic meetings for public lectures. In this case, candidates must pass the state examination (*kokkashiken*), the Japanese Nursing Examination, with three opportunities. After passing the exam, candidates will work as nursing assistants in Japan, where they have a three-year employment contract. Furthermore, the requirements to be able to work as care workers in Japan are that candidates must pass the same exam, the Japanese Nursing Examination, with only one opportunity. After passing this exam, candidates will also work as care worker assistants with contracts for four years (Sulistiyana, 2019). Furthermore, by having the licence, Indonesian workers can become permanent employees, bring their families, and have permanent residence permits in Japan. In addition, nurse candidates and care workers will receive benefits in the form of annual benefits and bonuses, occupational safety insurance, health insurance, and pension benefits (BP2MI, 2020). The salary received by workers who work as nurses is around 200.000 yen, while it is 175.000 yen for care workers (Sulistiyana, 2019).

2. Japan-Indonesia Specific Skilled Workers (SSW) Cooperation

In addition to the JIEPA framework, the Minister of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia, Hanif Dhakiri, and the Japanese Ambassador for Indonesia,

Masafumi Ishii, signed an MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) and MoC (Memorandum of Cooperation) on a Basic Framework for Proper Operation of the System for Foreign Human Resources with the Status of Residence of Specified Skilled Workers on June 25, 2019, in Jakarta. This collaboration aims to meet the needs of the productive-age workforce in Japan (Hardum, 2019). In the SSW MoC between Japan and Indonesia, the recruitment mechanism for Indonesian citizens as SSW candidates is regulated in the Business to Candidate (B2C) scheme, where receiving companies or accepting organisations (AO), or commonly referred to as *kumiai*, can deal directly with candidates to conduct selection, interviews, and assess their interests in labour recruitment (Kemlu, 2019). Indonesian workers who will work in Japan with SSW visas will work in the form of a personal relationship between workers and company users in Japan through an independent scheme that takes care of all needs towards certification to get a job. The Japanese government applies this independent scheme to minimise costs for prospective workers, where candidates can contact the recipient company directly through the Japanese government and Indonesian government portals. However, in this case, the Japanese government allows private institutions to connect job seekers with receiving companies. This institution is referred to as *Toroku Shien Kikan* (TSK), or Registered Support Organisation, an official company registered with the Immigration Services Agency (ISA) of Japan that will facilitate SSW work visas (Kemnaker, 2020).

Given that SSW cooperation is an individual scheme, Indonesian workers can directly meet with receiving companies or use TSK intermediaries as receiving institutions to facilitate meetings between Indonesian workers and companies, or vice versa, for free. In this case, AO can cooperate with TSK in preparation for the arrival of manpower and the implementation of other supporting activities. TSK itself is an organisation that receives power from the recipient company for the implementation of SSW labour recruitment. In this case, the company is obliged to support prospective workers, but they can be represented or authorised by TSK. TSK in Japan will be responsible for assisting the workforce in adapting to the new environment in Japan. This institution functions as a supporting institution or protector of foreign workers in Japan, so that if something untoward happens, the workforce will have a guarantor or protection agency. The receiving company will cooperate with TSK, which is a private party, by authorising the support of labour needs such as cultural introduction, language introduction, or

recruitment with the company to assist labour candidates in document management (Dea, 2022).

The main requirements to be able to become an SSW workforce member include being at least 18 years old, at least graduating from senior high school or the vocational high school equivalent, passing the JLPT (Japanese Language Proficiency Test) N4 or JFT-Basic (Japan Foundation Test for Basic Japanese) A2, which is a Japanese language proficiency test for foreign speakers, and passing the SSW work field skills test. For TITP alumni to apply for job categories in the same field, they just need to attach an internship competency exam or an internship recognition sheet from the original company (Dea, 2022). The process continued with interviews with Japanese company users and passing the medical check-up. Because SSW workers have the same rights and obligations as local workers, Indonesian workers working in Japan on SSW visas can get the same salary as Japanese workers. The average salary of SSW visa workers is around 180.000 yen to 250.000 yen per month, which is 21 to 30 million rupiah per month according to the policies of each company (Jissho Foundation, 2020). In addition, several other advantages of this SSW visa are that workers receive support from the company, get a place to live or an apartment, work insurance can be disbursed after the work period ends and they return to Indonesia, and they can change professions without having to be in accordance with their previous profession (Pradipta, 2022).

Basically, this SSW workforce aims to overcome the lack of manpower in filling important sectors in Japan, so it is important for working workers who use the residence permit to be equipped with skills in their fields (Dea, 2022). Therefore, in the process of sending workers, there are private institutes that act to prepare workers who will later be transferred to Japan. There are skills training programmes, interviews, and Japanese language and culture that can be followed by workers through LPK or Job Training Institutes spread throughout Indonesia to support the productivity and quality of prospective Indonesian workers who will go to Japan (Khairunnisa, 2021). LPK in this case plays a role in human resource development by providing consultation, services, training, and education, as well as connecting workers with Japanese companies by sending Indonesian workers. According to LPK, labour delivery schemes tend to be clearer and more organised because there is training, and preparation provided to workers. Some of the advantages of using this LPK service are career consulting to get a job according to Japanese company qualifications, assistance in training, document management, and company selection to departure. In addition, there is Japanese language and culture training, interview

guidance, and mental preparation to work in Japan so that job candidates have high adaptability (Dewajani, 2023).

Benefits of Labour Cooperation for Japan and Indonesia

For Japan, this employment cooperation will help address the country's labour crisis. The phenomenon of the labour shortage in Japan will be greatly helped by the presence of productive workers from Indonesia to fill important economic sectors in Japan, such as the 3K sector. This cooperation will be profitable for recipient companies in Japan regarding strengthening relationships with Indonesian companies, internationalisation of management, and bringing new ideas about work, production, and management. His presence among Indonesian workers through this cooperation scheme helps various SMEs (small and medium enterprises) in Japan continue to operate (Sulistiyana, 2019). Apart from that, the presence of nurses and care workers also helps look after the elderly, considering the high level of the elderly population in Japan who need their services in everyday life. This collaboration also helps build and maintain stable economic and social relations between Japan and Indonesia. Then, the main advantage of this collaboration for Japan is to continue to help Japan's economic growth with energy work as a driver of the country's economy (JICA, 2018).

In 2019, the Indonesian government targets being able to overcome the problem of unemployment through sending workers. As many as 70,000 people go to Japan every year because Indonesia has a growing workforce that cannot be fully absorbed within the country (Hadyan, 2019). Apart from that, the productivity and quality of the workforce in Indonesia were helped by the training provided by Japan. This also has an impact on improving quality Indonesian human resources, where many Indonesian workers have returned to their country with the knowledge and skills that can be useful for industrial development and create new businesses in the home country. With this training, it will also improve social values and work ethics. This employment cooperation also provides benefits by increasing income and living standards, as well as family and workforce welfare. Additionally, the opportunity to work in Japan can provide benefits by forming the knowledge and work character of Japanese society, which is positive for the energy of Indonesian workers (Ministry of Manpower, 2022). With cooperation in sending workers from Indonesia to Japan, Indonesia will get foreign exchange from the workforce, which will help the country's economic development (Rahmany, 2018).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Japan, as a developed country known for one of the highest economic growth rates in the world, is experiencing a labour crisis in the form of a lack of labour in the country.

Currently, the labour crisis facing Japan is affected by a declining population, which is also affected by a low birth rate. While the opposite condition occurs in Indonesia. However, there are labour problems faced by Indonesia regarding labour market imbalances and the low productivity of Indonesian labour. In this case, Japan has its own reasons for recruiting workers from Indonesia, such as the great potential possessed by Indonesian workers, the skills they possess, and the character of Indonesian workers.

To overcome the labour crisis, the Japanese government has made efforts to create a Womenomics policy and provide marriage fund subsidies, financial support for pregnancy programmes, and financial assistance to support children's lives. But in fact, these domestic policies are not enough to solve the problem of labour shortages in the country. Therefore, responding to these problems, Japan began to open immigration doors for foreign workers and carry out labour cooperation with Indonesia.

With Japan's efforts to change its labour policy to attract more foreign workers, the emergence of SSW and JIEPA cooperation has effectively become profitable employment cooperation for Japan and Indonesia. The training program and financial assistance provided by the Japanese government have proven to facilitate and increase the number of Indonesian migrant workers who are interested in working in Japan, as seen by the large number of Indonesian migrant workers, who are the third largest foreign workers in Japan. Apart from that, the training provided really helps migrant workers improve the quality and productivity of their work.

Furthermore, seeing that there are still many problems, such as falsification of documents, unpaid salaries, and the large number of illegal migrant workers from Indonesia. Japan and Indonesia policymakers, mostly the Ministry of Manpower, must be stricter in monitoring the sending of migrant workers and drafting migrant worker protection laws to protect Indonesian migrant workers abroad.

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