

Subjective wellbeing components among non-procedural blue collar Indonesian migrant worker: How international migration shapes their perspective

Adi Saputra Rusli*, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia

Margaretha Hanita, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia

Sri Murni, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia

*Email for Correspondence: ega.saputra090591@gmail.com margaretha.hanita@ui.ac.id sri.murni09@ui.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

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The studies of international migration, migrant worker, and subjective wellbeing (SWB) have been thoroughly examined. However, the question on those subjects is still rarely developed when it comes to the particular circumstances. Given the problems, this study focuses on detailed settings such as blue-collar worker and non-procedural (NBMW). This study also aims to explore the perception of public, government, and workers about the issue: how the different perspective of legality, obligation, rights, and security differ among parties. It is important to understand the rationale between them to acquire the proper insight and formulate the best grasp. It is done by analysing the components of SWB (pleasant and unpleasant affect) and the coping mechanisms to deal with it. This study uses qualitative method and interview to gather the data in order to obtain maximal result. This study finds that international are able to change their perception about life. NBMW are able to alter their unpleasant affect to the pleasant ones by doing some sort of coping mechanisms. There is almost non-existent dysfunctional coping used. Most of them are using problem and emotional focused coping mechanism to deal with the problem. One of the reasons is their consideration of future planning for family left behind and themselves. International migration plays an important role despite their imperfection while doing it. International migration provides them positive aspects such elation and hope though negative aspects like sadness, and anxiety and worry are not necessarily absent.

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INTRODUCTION

World economics today is affected by migrant worker (Goldin et al., 2011). Be that as it may including the non-procedural ones, migration especially related to the migrant worker closely associated with human trafficking, deportation, and risky working environment to the worker's health condition (Fassani & Mazza, 2020). The phenomena make the process of international migration for migrant worker becomes a concern and deemed relevant regulations are created. Regulations related to the migrant worker are facilitated through bilateral or multilateral government treaties which provide a definite protection for both parties – migrant worker and nation (Rosen, 2007). Regulations for international migration range from strict to lenient (Cai et al., 2014). Some of those regulations are exclusively seen from the government point of view which considers the safety of both migrant and its nation because international migration on the certain level is a non-traditional threat (Kicinger, 2004). It leads to the interpretation that international migration should be ruled by a more restrictive government policy (De Haas, 2011). However, there is a view that it is a contra productive step because it escalates illegal international migration (Castles, 2019). International migration among prospective migrant worker population is still relatively high despite the entire aforementioned situation. There are countless factors that drive to do so as migration itself is a decision resulted of complex thoughts and variables (Castelli, 2018).

By definition, a migrant is characterised as illegal if he/she break the law by entering a country illegally or continue to stay without a legal and proper documentation, showing that he/s does not possess the

status of refugee (Chiuri et al., 2003). Given that this research is conducted in the origin countries, the term 'illegal' is changed into 'non-procedural' to match the description provided to public. It focuses on the prevention of them to leave the origin country rather than to enter the destination ones. Indonesian migrant worker (IMW) is defined as someone who receives wages outside Indonesian territory according to the Article 1 paragraph (1) and (2) Law Number 18 of 2017 about Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers. The law is also put more detail explanation about IMW. According to the Article 1 paragraph (4) someone can also categorized as IMW if he/she works individual or household employers, as well as seafarers and fishing crews. Interestingly there is no term of 'non-procedural' or 'illegal' IMW in those constitution. The term 'illegal' or 'non-procedural' is applied on IMW placement which is done by individual (article 69 and 81) and unlicensed company according article 1 paragraph. Therefore the term 'non-procedural' is simply based on immigration reasoning mentioned.

There is a different perception between migrant worker and outsiders about the international migration. The views regarding threat, safety, opportunity, risk, and legality has been varied among them. It is measured by a highly subjective scale especially for those who feel unfacilitated by the regulation. The standard of threat, safety, opportunity, risk, and legality is usually different and simpler according to the views of migrant worker than the outsiders, including government. This happens because migrant workers use an individual experience as the benchmark. Those who successfully work overseas will spread and apply the experience to the others who interested. The perceptions between migrant worker and government are sometimes match and beneficial to both parties. On the other side it conflicts each other and creates a gap resulting to the consequences to the prospective migrant worker labelled as illegal, non-procedural, and other derogatory terms. Such situation challenges the government to design policies beneficial to both parties (De Haas, 2011).

Government's role regarding to SWB is crucial. It influences through wide range of policies and strategies, including ones that related to international migration. By prioritizing the policies, it is expected to improve positive factors that increase SWB among their population. It is not easy to construct such policies. Political and pragmatism impact usually derail the core issue to the partisan ideas. Policymakers and decision-makers are tightly bounded by the ideas to realize the ideals (Hakim & Havez, 2020). Indonesian's legal protection of migrant has been conservative in recent years (Ramdhani & Tirtawening, 2023). Changing a government paradigm is not easy too. This involves changing the basic ideas, principles, policies, and practices of how government functions and relates with its people. To institutionalize it is the next thing. It alters the entire structure of governance that requires changes on fundamental beliefs, principles, policies, and practices on how a government operates and interacts with its citizens. Institutionalizing it is the next steps. It is a significant transformation that requires both leadership and systemic changes. Changing a government paradigm therefore becomes a complicated approach that demands strategic planning, decision-making, and fidelity to principles. By taking these steps and fostering a supportive environment for change, governments can effectively transform their paradigms to better serve the needs of their citizens.

The number of Indonesian migrant worker continues to increase. They consist of different type and background, from maid to expatriate and low-income communities to the high ones. However, the over-general definition of migrant worker in Indonesian constitution creates ambiguity. It does not differentiate of the type of job, placement, and the nature of how they got the job (government agreement or private contract). It creates the ambiguity number of Indonesian migrant worker. More than 50% among them are blue-collar worker according to the Press Conference no HM.4.6/327/SET.M.EKON.3/10/2021 by Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs Republic of Indonesia. It builds the derogatory image of migrant worker. Public opinion sways to the negative image when dealing with migrant worker. The term is automatically linked to the blue-collar or domestic worker who worked overseas.

Though it is a fact that the derogatory is sourced from the poor advertisement about migrant worker, some questions are still continues to haunt. The question persists as of why some people 'choose' to remain be non-procedural migrant worker instead of the procedural ones despite all the risks followed. It is a necessity to consider all factors including political nexus to answer such a detailed question. One of the driving factor ties to the socio-economic issue which related to the ease of finding employment, inflation, low wages, currency rate, and unawareness about the process of working abroad as per government standard. Others are linked to the bigger scope like visa quota and higher cost incurred to be procedural migrant worker (Bah, 2023).

All the risks of becoming non-procedural migrant worker seem nothing despite the relentless story of exploitation and crime shadowed even for the procedural ones. Some government initiate a temporary worker programs that create a subclass of worker given to fewer rights and wages (Brochu et al., 2020; Clibborn & Wright, 2018, 2023; Wright et al., 2017; Wright & Clibborn, 2020). By the condition mentioned it is normal for the non-procedural blue collar migrant worker (NBMW) to express dissatisfaction with their choice. However, there are optimistic opinions that linked to it. It is evident related to the impacts on international

migration on their subjective wellbeing (SWB). It is quite surprising given that stressor related to the international migration persistently challenge them such as language barrier, cultural gap, and inability to utilise public services (Hill et al., 2019; Paillard-Borg & Hallberg, 2018). The situation is further helping partially explain of the question before of why some people ‘choose’ to be non-procedural migrant worker instead of the procedural ones despite all the risks followed.

Subjective well-being (SWB) among migrant workers is a multifaceted topic that encompasses various psychological, social, and economic factors. It refers to how people experience and evaluate their lives and specific areas and includes concepts like life satisfaction, happiness, and emotional well-being. It is related to SWB’s components proposed by Diener et al. (1999).

Table 1. Components of Subjective Well-Being (Diener et al., 1999)

Pleasant Affect	Unpleasant Affect	Life Satisfaction	Domain Satisfactions
Joy	Guilt and shame	Desire to change life	Work
Elation	Sadness	Satisfaction with current life	Family
Contentment	Anxiety and worry		Leisure
Pride	Anger	Satisfaction with past	Health
Affection	Stress	Satisfaction with future	Finances
Happiness	Depression	Significant others’ views of one’s life	Self
Ecstasy	Envy		One’s group

International migration is undeniably linked to SWB of migrant as a desire to improve it (Cai et al., 2014). It provides migrant opportunity to turn things around like unemployment and financial issue which is negatively connected to the SWB (Dolan et al., 2008). It also gives risk and consequences for both migrant and family left behind. International migration can both positively and negatively shape subjective well-being, depending on a variety of individual, social, and structural factors. Since SWB consist of highly subjective components it is fair to assume that NBMW develop coping strategies against the challenges. The coping strategies can be adapted overtime to deal with stressor mentioned and boosts the SWB by managing unpleasant affect and focus on pleasant affect. Studies on SWB in migrant and migration related are largely conducted and most of them include coping strategies as its instruments of research to know the role of it in forming SWB.

Coping strategy can be attained through positive or negative traits. It ranges from the problem-focused coping to dysfunctional ones (Carver et al., 1989).

Table 2. Ways of Coping mechanisms (Carver et al., 1989)

Problem-focused coping	Emotion-focused coping	Dysfunctional coping
- Active coping - Planning - Suppression of competing activities - Restraint coping - Seeking social support for instrumental reasons	- Seeking social support for emotional reasons - Positive reinforcement and growth - Acceptance - Turning to religion - Humor	- Focus on and venting of emotions - Behavioral disengagement - Mental disengagement - Alcohol-drug use - Denial

The study of coping strategy is usually harmonised with SWB because it is the important mechanism to form SWB. This study aims to analyse how the coping strategy is done overseas for NBMW. The question whether how it correlated to their negatively-deemed status as non-procedural will be analysed because it is an important detail to describe how SWB is formed. This study explores the relationship between coping strategies and subjective well-being (SWB) among non-procedural migrant workers (NBMW) by examining their unique challenges while living and working abroad. It integrates existing literature on SWB by linking it to the experiences of marginalized migrant groups, providing a nuanced understanding of the mechanisms through which coping strategies influence SWB. The research also highlights the experiences of non-procedural migrants, filling a gap in the literature regarding the specific dynamics affecting SWB in this population. The findings can inform policymakers and support organizations about coping mechanisms that enhance SWB for non-procedural migrants, leading to targeted interventions and support systems. The study also provides insights into the context of living and working overseas, offering a valuable perspective for future research.

METHOD

Having high level of SWB is not necessarily devoid of the unpleasant affect. Sometimes it is just simply that the pleasant ones are dominating toward the other. This study analysed both components based on the premise. This study used qualitative method because it deals with participant's experience and live events. It also needs approach that can capture all the data needs to be conjectured into the issue. The full picture of how their SWB is shaped by international migration can be derived by analysing the answer given to the question.

This research was conducted on the Soekarno-Hatta Immigration Check Point. It is done so because Soekarno-Hatta is the main international gate for Indonesia. It is become the main point for every migrant because of the access given. It is connected to the major airport overseas with plenty option. Soekarno-Hatta airport is also more reachable than its counterpart: Bali. Therefore, research done in Soekarno-Hatta Immigration Check Point can provide better insight to the issue mentioned.

SWB is typically obtained by series of questionnaires. However this method proved to be dilemmatic when applied to the targeted issue since the subjects are those who already deemed non-procedural. They have the tendency of not telling the whole truth or hiding some facts which believed to be detrimental to them. This happens because immigration officer uses inconvenience as one of the factor to fail them to depart, assuming that they will be treated badly or a victim of human smuggling. Questionnaire is also have limited scope on portraying the full picture of positive-negative effects and coping strategy used. Sometime the questionnaire cannot perfectly understood by the respondent and make the answer is more than questionnaire can handle.

Another form of data collection technique is needed to make up the limitation. The technique used is unstructured interview. It begins with asymmetrical question which revolved around their push-pull factor, pleasant-unpleasant affect, and the coping strategy used to tackle the unpleasant ones. It doesn't begin with the same question theme but rather the random theme to lighten the atmosphere so that the participant does not feel intimidated. It is important because they are fully aware that they have a problem with authorities resulted in their postponement. It makes them cautious and secretive and hiding some important facts.

Respondents selected for this research are blue collar Indonesia migrant worker who deemed non-procedural resulted in their postponement. They can be first timer or frequent worker, man or woman, and any marital and family status. This study uses purposive sampling within aforementioned boundaries to get a valid result. Participants who claim to be a tourist that in fact full of evidence of worker will be first questioned to open the real motives. If he/she is still declining to be sincere then the interview is halted and excluded from the result. It is done to effectuate the time during research in order to acquire more data.

All the respondent's profiles then collected and stored in tables consist of the data to clarify. The tables are shown as follows:

Table 3. Data Table

ID	Age	Sex	First Job?	Pleasant Affect	Unpleasant Affect	Coping Mechanisms
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The Affects in SWB components and coping strategy will be written as code to anticipate participant's answer that will likely provide more than 1 answer. The code will be determined as follows:

Table 4. Coding of Affect in Components of Subjective Well-Being (Diener, et al., 1999)

Pleasant Affect (A)	Unpleasant Affect (B)
Joy (1)	Guilt and shame (1)
Elation (2)	Sadness (2)
Contentment (3)	Anxiety and worry (3)
Pride (4)	Anger (4)
Affection (5)	Stress (5)
Happiness (6)	Depression (6)
Ecstasy (7)	Envy (7)

Table 5. Coding of Ways of Coping mechanisms (Carver, et al., 1989)

Problem-focused coping (A)	Emotion-focused coping (B)	Dysfunctional coping (C)
• Active coping (1)	• Seeking social support for emotional reasons (1)	• Focus on and venting of emotions (1)
• Planning (2)	• Positive reinforcement and growth (2)	• Behavioral disengagement (2)
• Suppression of competing activities (3)		

• Restraint coping (4)	• Acceptance (3)	• Mental
• Seeking social support for	• Turning to religion (4)	disengagement (3)
instrumental reasons (5)	• Humor (5)	• Alcohol-drug use (4)
		• Denial (5)

The code will be added a supplementary account if the participant gives more detailed explanation about what they do. The data then analysed to make inquiry about their job and life abroad.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After interview is conducted the data will be presented in table in order to simplify and be discussed for its components. The first will be participant characteristics that consist of age, sex, and whether is it their first job or not. Next discussion is about the components of SWB, pleasant and unpleasant affect. Here the discussion will focus on their condition related to the work and life overseas. For first timer, the issue will be emphasized their condition before they have the opportunity to work overseas. It seems that international migration gives them hope and connected with SWB (Cai et al., 2014). The final discussion is about coping mechanisms. It is done in the manner of how they use coping mechanisms to change the unpleasant affect into pleasant ones. The data table is presented as follows:

Table 6. Data Obtained

ID	Age	Sex	First Job?	Pleasant Affect	Unpleasant Affect	Coping Mechanisms
1	37	F	No	A5	B2	B1, B3
2	36	M	No	A5, A6	B4	A3, A4
3	49	M	No	A5, A6	B4	A4, B3, B4
4	28	M	Yes	A4, A5	B3	B3
5	23	M	Yes	A4, A5	B3	B3
6	20	F	Yes	A5	B2, B3	B3
7	19	M	Yes	A5, A6	B3	A1, B3
8	28	M	No	A3, A4	B5, B7	A3, B2, B3
9	41	F	No	A5	B1, B2, B3, B4	A3, A4, A5, B3, B4
10	50	F	No	A1, A5	B2	A4, B1, B3, B4
11	41	F	No	A5	B2	A4, B3
12	20	F	Yes	A1, A6	B2, B3	A1, A2, A3
13	29	F	Yes	A1, A4, A6	B2, B3	A2, B3
14	34	M	No	A1, A5	B2	A1, A2, B2, B3
15	34	F	No	A6	B2, B3	A5, B3
16	22	M	No	A1, A3, A4, A6	B3, B5, B7	A2, A3, A4, C4 (lightly drinking and smoking)
17	21	F	No	A1, A4	B3	A1, A2, B1, B3
18	40	M	No	A1, A3	B3	A1, B3, C4
19	42	F	No	A3	B2	A2, A5, B3
20	32	M	No	A4, A6	B3	A3, A4, B3
21	22	M	Yes	A1, A4	B3, B7	A2, B3
22	28	F	Yes	A1, A4	B3, B7	B1, B3
23	32	F	No	A1, A3, A6	B3, B5	A1, A2, A5
24	41	F	No	A1, A3, A6	B2, B3	A2, B1
25	39	F	No	A1	B2, B3, B7	A1, A2, B
26	36	F	No	A1, A2, A6	B2, B5	A2, A4, B3
27	18	F	Yes	A4	B2, B3	A3, A4, B3
28	22	M	No	A1, A3, A4	B3, B7	A1, A2, A3, B2
29	37	F	No	A1	B3	A2, B3
30	34	F	No	A1	B3	A1, B3
31	38	F	No	A1	B3	A5, B1, B3

Participants Characteristics

There are 31 respondents. The youngest is 18 years old and the oldest is 40 years old. The average age is 32 years, a legal age to work. The data also shows they consist of 19 female and 12 male, and 22 of them

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are not working overseas for the first time. The data indicates that they are fully aware of working overseas can be challenging because they have done it before. The rest of them who never work overseas can imagine the hardship since they can describe the challenge, benefit, and the coping mechanism to deal with it.

Pleasant Affect

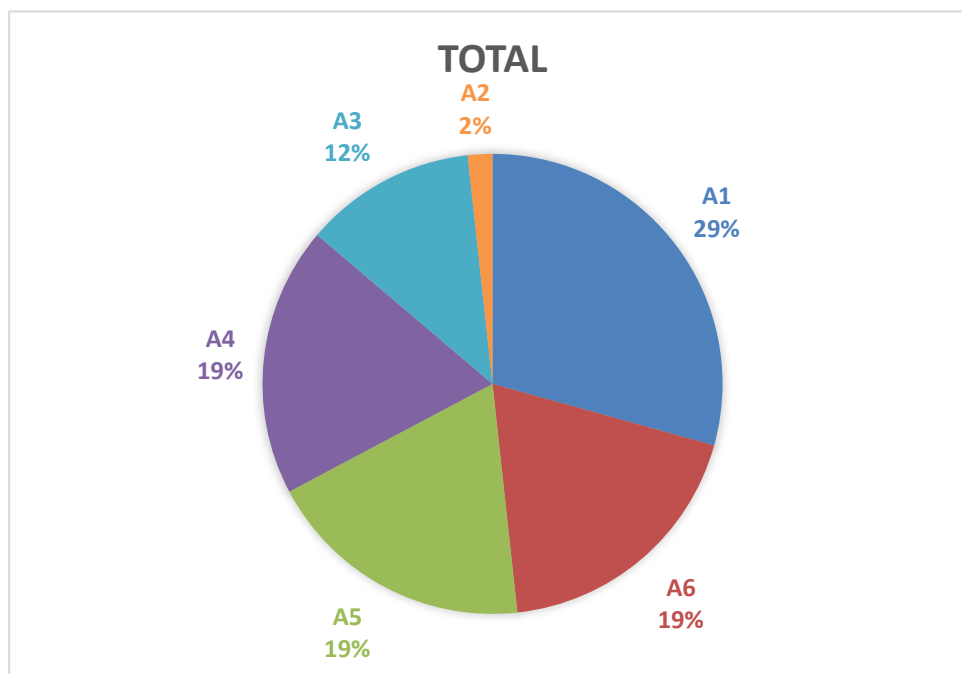


Figure 1. Pleasant Affect

Most respondents have more than one pleasant affect. A1 (joy) is the most pleasant affect found. Respondents reported that they are feeling happy when they have an opportunity to work overseas (again). One of the reasons is they can provide better financial support for family in origin country.

"I feel happy because I finally can work so that I can provide better support for my family" (participant 12)

Others are emphasizing on how working overseas can boost their pride (A4). This mainly happens because they can provide better economic support. For male participants it shows that they are competent enough to be a breadwinner.

"I am proud to be a breadwinner for my family. I can finally dedicate myself to my parents. I prove that I am not a lost cause in the family" (participant 4)

For the first timer, is related to their condition before get an opportunity to work overseas. The difficulties of finding decent job to get a good salary on the home country affect their perception. By having the opportunity, even if as a blue collar which the wage is barely above minimum wage, they are feeling hope and able to construct better plan for future.

"I can finally rest assured that I can provide better life for my wife and kids, give them proper education" (participant 3)

Unpleasant Affect

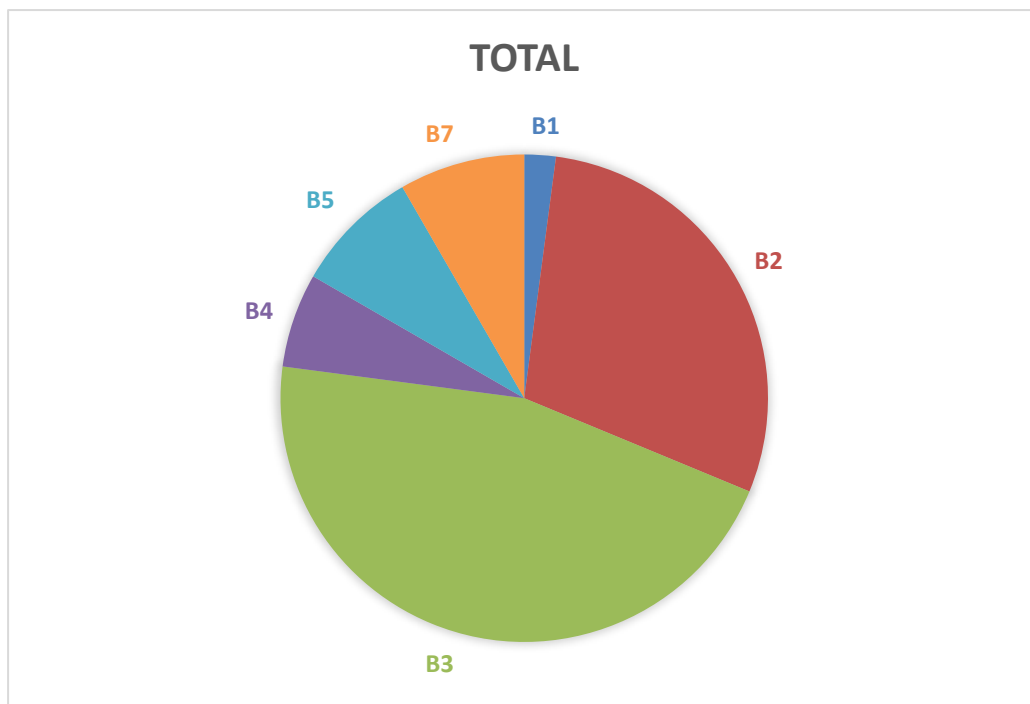


Figure 2. Unpleasant Affect

Almost half respondents are indicated to have more than one unpleasant affect. Most of them are dealing with anxiety and worry (B3). However, there is different angle of what the anxiety and worry about. It is ranged from their life abroad to their family left behind, from work related to private life like marriage.

"I hope they (wife and kids) are fine when I am working" (participant 18)

Others are more concerned about how is life abroad. For the first timer, it is linked more to their life-work abroad because it is their first time. They are still anxious even though they have a mild description from associate about their life overseas

"It is about wage and my life. Where do I sleep, eat, work hours, and how tough the situation" (participant 6)

The study shows there is no unpleasant affect regarding their legality to work overseas. It seems that they are unaware that their legality can be questioned. It is a proof that there is different standard about legality to work overseas between public and government. Public tend to see it from the relaxed side, rooted from the mind-set that the requirement for working overseas laid entirely from the destination country. Government, on the other side, determined to have its own standard such as document or guarantee showing that their job is bonafide to avoid being victim of human trafficking.

Coping Mechanisms

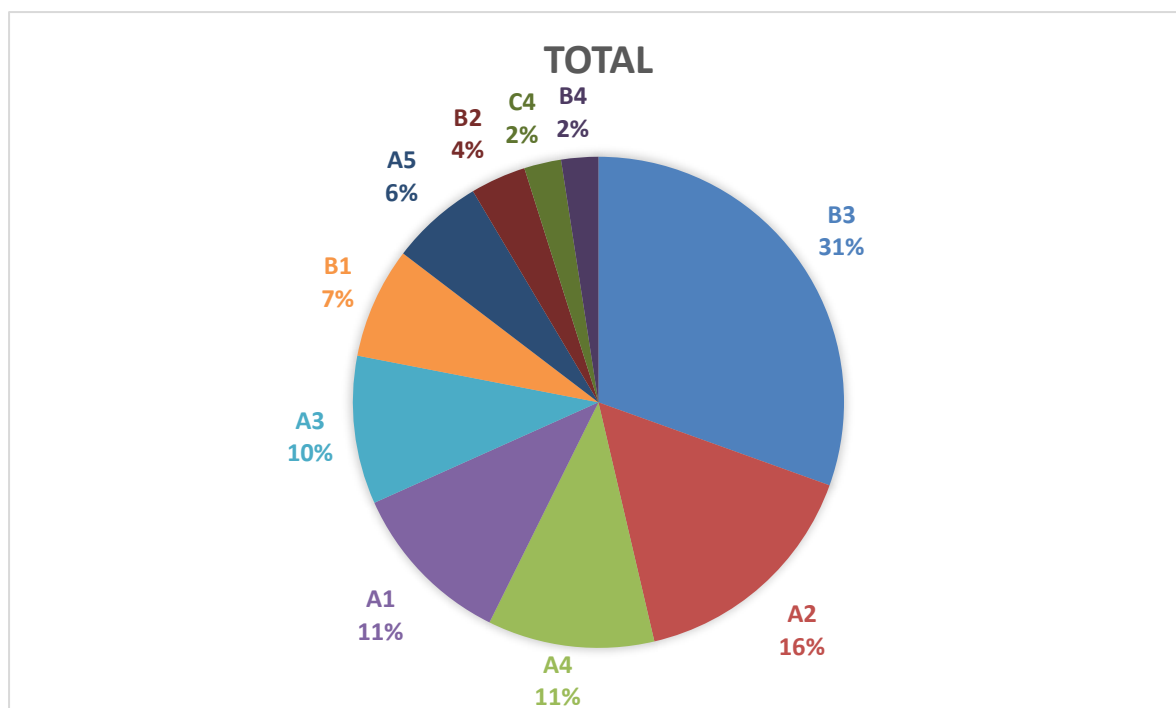


Figure 3. Coping Mechanism

Identical to both affects, coping mechanisms done by the NBMW are consist of more than one element. There is a surprising finding which the dysfunctional coping (C) is the least mechanism used despite their condition as non-procedural. One of the participants said that it was only happen during times when they need to rest or socialize. It is also to maintain their income. It seems they are still sober for not intoxicated for the sake of the future.

"Just in weekend so I can sleep tightly. ...and I don't want my salary to be reduced by it" (participant 16)

CONCLUSION

International migration positively impacts the perspective of life for non-procedural and blue-collar workers, providing coping mechanisms and enhancing their well-being. The different perspectives of the public, government, and workers about working overseas play a crucial role in this issue. Legality, obligation, rights, and security need to be re-evaluated to ensure a maximum output of international migration. Future research could explore comparative analysis of migration policies, the role of social support systems in migrant well-being, public perceptions of migrant workers, the intersection of migration and mental health, the effectiveness of legal frameworks and institutional mechanisms in protecting migrant workers' rights, and the reintegration of migrant workers post-migration. Understanding these areas can lead to more inclusive migration policies and better alignment of interests between migrants, governments, and employers. By addressing these issues, a more inclusive and effective migration system can be achieved.

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