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Public attitudes towards migrant workers in Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand

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Public attitudes towards migrant workers in Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand

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Foreword

More and more women and men are moving abroad for work. Recent figures from the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimate that in the South-East Asia and the Pacific subregion, 11.6 million people are migrant workers – 5.2 million of whom are women. The social and economic development potential of labour migration – including contributions to gender equality – in both countries of origin and countries of destination is tremendous, and growing. Nevertheless, the migration experience also tends to be one where migrants are faced with discrimination based on gender, nationality, and other facets of identity.

Migrant workers experience discrimination, exclusion, and abuse both in countries of destination and countries of origin. Addressing negative public attitudes towards migrant workers can play an important role in eliminating discrimination at work and in communities, as well as in strengthening protection for migrant workers in law and policy. Determining the required shifts in these attitudes is crucial in order to design programming that effectively addresses discriminatory treatment, both that all migrant workers face vis-à-vis nationals, and more specifically that women migrant workers face vis-à-vis men migrant workers.

In 2010, the ILO conducted a survey assessing public attitudes towards migrants in four countries of destination for ASEAN migrant workers – the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand. In 2019, the ILO and UN Women conducted a second survey in an attempt to monitor progress and trends over almost a decade, this time considering Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand. This 2019 study has been carried out jointly by Safe and Fair, under the European Union-United Nations Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls; and by TRIANGLE in ASEAN, a partnership between the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Global Affairs Canada, and the ILO.

While overall migration has increased over the last decade, the new study reveals that positive attitudes towards migrant workers have declined. The study also confirms that public support for migrant workers is largely driven by the relationships and ties that individuals and communities develop with migrant worker communities. People who know and engage with migrant workers on a personal level are more likely to be supportive of their rights and to assist them in times of crisis. Polarization in views has increased, however, and people with limited or no interaction with migrant workers are less supportive than before. Alarmingly, positive attitudes among respondents who employ migrant domestic workers in their homes have also decreased.

Although many people may hold an overall negative view when talking about migrant workers, the study also finds that positive public support exists for policy initiatives aimed at supporting women migrant workers, especially related to ending violence against women. Respondents particularly expressed support for shelters to assist women migrant workers who face violence, for stronger enforcement against violence, and for better conditions for domestic workers. This tends to show that focused attention on a particular group of migrant

workers and the specific issues concerning those workers can help generate more public support, particularly when that focused attention emphasizes shared experiences.

The implications of these findings are clear: our programmes and policies must further encourage interaction and community engagement with migrant communities, and must discourage exclusion, isolation, and discrimination.

The ILO and UN Women will take these findings forward, with renewed efforts to contribute to positive, non-discriminatory public attitudes towards all migrant workers, and especially women migrant workers.

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The report builds on the 2010 ILO TRIANGLE in ASEAN public attitudes study, as well as the Safe and Fair Technical Regional Meeting “Changing attitudes and behaviour towards women migrant workers in ASEAN” held in Bangkok from 26 to 27 November 2018.

Executive summary

Background

Globally, public debate over international migration has become increasingly intense over the past few years. Some governments, especially in ageing societies, are newly opening doors to migrant workers and concurrently looking at programmes to support multiculturalism. Others are presently reforming or creating labour laws for domestic workers, applicable to both nationals and migrants. However, recent polls and elections in other countries highlight that channelling xenophobia towards migrant workers is a potent political instrument (Grosfoguel, Oso, and Christou, 2015; Miller-Gonzalez and Rensmann, 2010). Negative attitudes towards migrant workers are expressed in varied contexts through discriminatory actions, such as limiting or denying entry, exclusion from access to services, or exclusion from a number of labour protection regulations applicable to national workers, including social protection.

In 2010, the International Labour Organization (ILO) conducted a large-scale public opinion survey of 4,020 nationals in four Asian migrant destination countries – the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand – to assess public attitudes towards migrant workers. The findings indicated somewhat greater support for migrant workers in the Republic of Korea and Singapore than in Malaysia and Thailand due to greater interaction with migrant workers in those countries. Overall, however, the 2010 survey findings revealed that the majority of respondents in all countries held unfavourable attitudes towards migrant workers (ILO, 2011).

Now, nearly a decade later, the TRIANGLE in ASEAN programme (ILO) and Safe and Fair programme (ILO and UN Women) have conducted a similar survey of 4,099 nationals to track trends of attitudes in three of the above countries. One of the original four countries was changed, with the Republic of Korea replaced by Japan, given its emergence as an important destination country for low-skilled migrant workers in Asia. Certain questions from the first survey were repeated to allow for identification of longitudinal changes in public support for migrant workers.

This 2019 study also adds questions on women-specific issues, including attitudes to ending violence against women migrant workers; to decent work in women-dominant occupations of domestic work and sex work; to social protection including maternity leave; and to non-discrimination, including during pregnancy.

Current situation

The number of documented migrant workers residing in the South-East Asia and the Pacific subregion is an estimated 11.6 million (ILO, 2018b). Migrant workers make crucial contributions to the economies and societies of both origin and destination countries.

Of the migrant workers in the region in 2017, 5.2 million are women (ILO, 2018b). Women migrant workers compose the majority of workers in several sectors: domestic work, entertainment, seafood processing, electronics manufacturing, and garment manufacturing, among others. They frequently experience gender-based inequalities, exploitation, and sometimes violence during the migration process, which compound the prejudice and discrimination they experience as migrant workers.

In Japan, migrant workers account for less than 2 per cent of the total population of approximately 126 million persons (Migration Policy Institute, 2018). In Malaysia, migrant workers number between an estimated 4.2–4.8 million (World Bank, 2019). There are more than 850,000 migrant workers in Singapore, in a population of approximately 5.6 million (Singapore Ministry of Manpower, 2019). In Thailand there are an estimated 3.9 million migrant workers, most of them from Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Myanmar (UN Working Group on Migration in Thailand, 2019).

Among countries of destination in this study there is a demand for low-skilled workers in sectors that are mainly low wage (care work including domestic work, entertainment, construction, agriculture, and manufacturing) (UN Working Group on Migration in Thailand, 2019; ILO, 2017b; UN Women, 2017). Yet, significant proportions of the public in all four countries have negative perceptions of migrant workers, attitudes in contradiction to the actual contribution made by migrant workers to destination economies and societies. At times the attitudes are also in contradiction with actions the majority of the public say they would take, or with policies, especially related to migrant women's issues, that majorities support.

Unfortunately, negative attitudes can condone discrimination, exploitation, and even violence against migrant workers. They can also detrimentally affect policies on labour migration, including those most affecting women migrant workers, such as policies on domestic work. Public attitudes and perceptions vary based on the multiple and intersecting identities of migrant workers they encounter. Public in countries of destination may hold biases based on a migrant worker's nationality, gender, sex, ethnicity, marital status, language, race, documentation status, age, or education.

Understanding the nuances and complexity of public attitudes – and the relations of attitudes with behaviour – is essential to any measures aiming to ensure positive migration outcomes,

non-discrimination and protection of rights at work and in service provision, and freedom from exploitation and violence in labour migration throughout the region.

Select findings

In order to understand the overall level of public support towards migrant workers in countries of destination, this study explores public support and attitudes related to several themes: Labour market shortages, migration and crime, social and cultural threats, equal treatment with nationals, violence against women migrant workers, and also women-dominant sectors: domestic work and the entertainment sector.

- Population demographics are changing in Asia. In destination countries for migrants, dependency ratios are falling, meaning there is a lower percentage of workers in the population, and also indicating that populations are ageing. Both point to the need for more workers to maintain labour forces, and to provide care to the elderly. World Bank data from Malaysia, for instance, further suggests that a 10 per cent net increase in manual or "low-skilled" migrant workers may increase Malaysia's GDP by up to 1.1 per cent (World Bank, 2015).

  Yet, despite these labour market shortages, and the economic gains to be made from labour migration, not all of the public are convinced of the need for migrant workers. Among survey respondents, 56 per cent in Malaysia, 53 per cent in Thailand, 35 per cent in Japan, and 25 per cent in Singapore said there is not a need for low-skilled migrant workers in their countries. When asked if migrant workers are a "drain on the economy", 30 per cent in Singapore, 32 per cent in Japan, 40 per cent in Thailand, and 47 per cent in Malaysia agreed.

- High percentages of the public polled said that they thought crime rates had increased due to migration: 52 per cent in Japan, 52 per cent in Singapore, 77 per cent in Thailand, and 83 per cent in Malaysia. However, in Malaysia, for example, a recent econometric study has shown that the presence of migrant workers reduces both property and violent crime. An increase of 100,000 migrant workers reduces crimes committed by 1.5 percent (Özden, Testaverde, and Wagner, 2015 in World Bank, 2015). Compared to the 2010 survey results for Malaysia, one positive trend is that the level of 2019 respondents who think that migrants commit a high number of crimes has dropped dramatically, from 80 to 59 per cent.[1]

- Survey respondents perceiving that migrant workers threaten their country's culture and heritage were 41 per cent in Japan, 53 per cent in Singapore, 58 per cent in Thailand, and 68 per cent in Malaysia. Similarly, some among the public say that migrant workers have a poor work ethic and that they cannot trust them (Singapore, 32 per cent; Japan, 34 per cent; Malaysia, 44 per cent; and Thailand, 60 per cent).

1 Note this paragraph gives figures for public attitudes towards migrants and crime asked two different ways: the first question asks whether respondents think the crime rate increased; and the second asks whether respondents think migrants commit a high number of crimes.

While these trends point to destination country contexts where migrants face social exclusion and discrimination, there was majority support in Japan and Thailand among respondents when asked whether women migrant workers should be allowed to bring their children with them when migrating (33 per cent in Singapore, 43 per cent in Malaysia, 55 per cent in Japan, and 62 per cent in Thailand). Further, the study found that majorities of the public said they had spoken or would speak out against someone who was saying offensive things about migrants (Singapore, 54 per cent; Thailand, 58 per cent; Japan, 26 per cent; and Malaysia, 70 per cent).

- While equality of treatment of nationals on par with migrant workers in employment and working conditions is enshrined in international laws, legal gaps in equality at work for all migrants persist. The majority of the public surveyed were of the view that migrants cannot expect the same pay or benefits as nationals for the same job. This view was particularly strong in Singapore (60 per cent) and Malaysia (58 per cent), followed by Thailand (52 per cent). A minority of the public in Japan (35 per cent) held this view.

  When adding a gendered element and asking later in the survey whether migrant women should receive pay on par with nationals, Malaysians were consistent in their response (56 per cent thought they should not receive equal pay), and the respondents in the other three countries showed much less of a negative attitude when asked: 42 per cent in Singapore, 25 per cent in Thailand, and 17 per cent in Japan. Further supporting women migrant workers and contrary to laws in Malaysia and Singapore, majorities in every country thought that women migrant workers should have rights to maternity leave (71 per cent in Thailand, 66 per cent in Japan, 62 per cent in Malaysia, and 51 per cent in Singapore).

- Violence against women migrant workers was the issue to which the surveyed public gave migrants their strongest support, in terms of support and response mechanisms. The public support migrant women having access to shelters if they experience violence, at these levels of response: 68 per cent in Japan, 79 per cent in Singapore, 81 per cent in Malaysia, and 85 per cent in Thailand. When asked if they support stronger law enforcement to reduce violence against migrant women, 67 per cent of the public in Japan responded positively, 77 per cent in Singapore, 82 per cent in Malaysia, and 83 per cent in Thailand.

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Harnessing the strong public support for freedom from violence for migrant women, as shown in this survey, and turning it into law and action is imperative, especially at a moment when governments, trade unions, and employers around the world have come together to adopt new international laws to counter violence. The June 2019 International Labour Conference adopted the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) and the associated Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 (No. 206) concerning the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work, and recognizing the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment.

- Second to supporting migrant women who experience violence, the public also supported improved labour conditions for domestic workers – though employers among the respondents were less supportive. Overall figures showed that 64 per cent of the public in Japan, 71 per cent in Malaysia, 78 per cent in Singapore, and 80 per cent in Thailand support better labour conditions for domestic workers. Majorities in every country also supported recognition of care work as a formal profession.

  This public support did not translate, however, into good employment conditions and provision of work entitlements as reported by employers in the survey. When presented with a list of eight entitlements (such as paid leave, overtime pay, ability to hold their passports or a phone, or a day off per week), Thai employers said they provide an average of roughly four entitlements to domestic workers, while in Singapore it was nearly three, two and a half in Malaysia, and one in Japan. The most commonly provided entitlements were paid leave, sick leave, and one day off per week. Maternity leave, while uncommon, was most frequently cited by employers in Thailand. Some 43 per cent of Japanese employers of domestic workers said they did not provide any entitlements at all to domestic workers.

- Entertainment work, a women-dominant sector in which migrants work, is highly impacted by public attitudes and stereotypes. The entertainment sector, and the sex industry within it, largely remains outside of labour protections in the region and is criminalized. The United Nations' Thailand Migration Report in 2019 found that: "Due to the criminalization of their work and the implementation of anti-trafficking interventions, migrant sex workers in Thailand face the regular threat of harassment and arrest, severely damaging their ability to earn a livelihood and support their families" (UN Working Group on Migration in Thailand, 2019).

  This survey asked the public about their support for improved labour conditions for sex workers. Support for better labour conditions was highest in Japan and Thailand (52 per cent), followed by Singapore (40 per cent) and Malaysia (22 per cent). The survey also asked about public support for decriminalization of sex work. In Thailand 40 per cent of the public support decriminalization, 36 per cent in Singapore, 30 per cent in Japan, and 17 per cent in Malaysia.

What factors correlate with public support for migrant workers? Interactions with migrant workers

The study explored whether demographic variables correlated with public support for migrant workers. Although some differences between countries were found, demographic variables were not strongly associated with levels of public support.

Instead, the frequency and quality of interaction with migrant workers were a strong predictor of support for migrant workers generally. Personal contact with migrant workers was significantly higher in Malaysia and Singapore, while Japan had the lowest level of encounters, with 53 per cent of respondents reporting no encounter with migrants ever. By contrast, in Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand 5 per cent, 8 per cent, and 11 per cent of the public, respectively, reported never encountering migrant workers.

It is critical therefore to encourage more interaction of communities with migrant workers. Interventions that foster trust building, understanding, and familiarity with each other are crucial. Decreasing the distance between nationals in countries of destination and migrant workers requires a multi-pronged approach including changes to laws and policy to ensure there are no exclusions or "special rules" that apply to migrant workers; that they receive fair and equal treatment; and that city planning, workplace inclusion, and community platforms work to encourage social interaction.

Changes in public support for migrant workers: From 2010 to 2019

The current study set out to assess changes in knowledge, attitudes, and practices over time, with longitudinal comparison to the 2010 study. Because of the switch of Japan for the Republic of Korea in the 2019 study, longitudinal results were only compared between Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand. Looking at the KAP Index (knowledge, attitudes, practice index, a composite of answers to 15 survey questions on a 0–100 scale) scores for 2010 and 2019, there was a modest decline in all three countries. This indicates that support for migrant workers has declined. Singapore and Thailand each saw seven-point drops in the index, whereas Malaysia had a more marginal decrease of three points. Despite the drop, Singapore remains the highest scoring country, an indication that support for migrant workers remains relatively stronger there than in Malaysia and Thailand. However, the results suggest that most people in all three countries have limited knowledge about migrant workers, hold many negative attitudes towards them, and are unwilling to engage in behaviour that would support migrants.

Singapore, which displayed high levels of public interaction with migrant workers in 2010, saw levels of public interaction with migrant workers drop in 2019. Respondents in Singapore in 2019 reported knowing migrant workers personally, mostly as friends or colleagues at work (at 48 per cent, as opposed to 57 per cent in 2010).

Overall, in both Malaysia and Thailand the public's interaction with migrant workers increased. In Malaysia, 15 per cent more people said they know migrant workers than in 2010. The increase in Thailand was very high, with 40 per cent more people saying they know migrant workers. This was evident across provinces, as well as in both urban and rural areas of Thailand.

Despite the correlation of a higher KAP Index with an individual's interaction with migrant workers, support for migrant workers declined in all three countries over the period. This is due to a greater KAP Index decline (by 27, 25, and 22 per cent in Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore, respectively) among respondents with no interaction with migrant workers. The KAP Index did not change significantly for respondents who have regular interaction with migrant workers, which suggests an increased polarization in support between persons exposed to migrant workers and persons who are not.

The above findings are qualified, however, and nuances are found when looking at results from employers of domestic workers. The survey asked respondents if they were employers of domestic workers, which allowed for disaggregation of employer versus non-employer support for migrant workers. A strong, positive relationship had been found in 2010 between employers of migrant domestic workers and their having positive support for migrant workers (as correlated with the KAP Index). In 2019, these results changed dramatically. While domestic worker employers' support declined slightly in Singapore (declining by 6 out of 100 points), in Malaysia and Thailand, employers were found to be much less supportive (with support declining by 25 points and 22 points, respectively). This finding suggests that migrant domestic workers in Malaysia and Thailand may be facing higher rates of discrimination today than they did in 2010.

Recommendations

1. Promote inclusion, social interaction, and community engagement with migrant workers in destination countries, including through changes to policy and practice.

1.1 Stimulate attitude changes on specific issues to tackle discrimination and barriers that prevent the fair treatment of migrant workers and their social inclusion.

- Reform and align immigration and employment policies with other national regulations to ensure that migrant workers are able to fully access rights on par with nationals. These policies could reverse the negative trend of considering migrant workers as a temporary labour force.
- Adopt policies, regulations, and operating procedures that support social inclusion, including access to services, social security, schools, and health facilities.
- City planning can promote social inclusion by avoiding ghettoization of migrant workers' accommodation. Physical distance is a barrier that hinders migrant workers from integrating into the local community and encourages segregation and discrimination.
- Ensure that labour migration governance mechanisms are accessible, affordable, and not time consuming. Across all four countries, respondents said that migrant workers with regular status can adapt better than those without. Indeed, migrant workers with irregular status fear going out in public, as arrest, detention, and deportation are possible outcomes should they be too visible or encounter authorities.

1.2 Design, support, and deliver policies that facilitate platforms and community events where migrant workers and the public can meaningfully interact and demonstrate the positive impact of migrant workers on societies and economies.

1.3 Encourage inclusion in the workplace by working with employers and trade unions to promote the rights of migrant workers. Trade unions could promote solidarity and encourage inclusion by accepting and supporting migrant workers to join as members where it is lawful for them to do so. Campaigns targeted towards migrant workers and trade union members should encourage migrant workers to join unions, where lawful, and to shape the attitudes of trade unions towards accepting and empowering all workers as part of the unions, regardless of their country of origin or migration status. Existing restrictions on migrant workers, or migrant-reliant sectors, to join unions should be removed.

1.4 Avoid dehumanizing terms to refer to migrants and migrant workers in legal texts and other official documents.

2. Conduct awareness-raising activities with the general public.

2.1 Design campaigns to raise awareness by providing accurate and positive information about migrant workers and their contributions to national economy. The study identified that the majority of the respondents had limited knowledge about the important contributions migrant workers make to destination countries. Information campaigns can help to inform the public ideally by working on shifting social norms and shared values. It is important to focus on specific sectors and problems so that the public can relate to the messages in a more personalized way.

- Promote campaigns that address the root of negative attitudes towards migrant workers. Strive to develop a personal connection between the public and migrant workers by focusing on specific migrant work sectors and also on interactions among nationals and migrant workers within that sector.
- Promote evidence of the beneficial impacts of migrant workers to strengthen positive attitudes while at the same time debunking common myths, such as the characterization of migrant workers as criminals, as taking jobs from nationals, or as having a negative impact on the economy.
- Tackle stigma and raise the status of roles and work sectors in which migrant workers work. Undervaluing the work of migrants has negative consequences and can lead to discrimination and social exclusion. Promoting the importance of decent work, equal opportunities, social protection, gender equality, and inclusion are essential.
- Take care to ensure that messaging does not promote migrant workers – especially women migrant workers – as "victims" or inherently vulnerable. This can feed into narratives that migrant workers are weaker and powerless, and through emphasizing difference, can undermine migrant workers' claims to the same rights at work as nationals.
- When promoting changes in practice and behaviour, give practical tips and guides for action, rooted in laws and other normative guidance.
- Communicate messages through mass media as well as social media platforms, including Facebook, Line, YouTube, and Instagram, to maximize reach. Tackle "fake news", racial discrimination, and hate speech online, and ensure that civil society online activism is encouraged and supported.

2.2 Complement and reinforce public campaigns with targeted interventions directed at influencer groups.

- Encourage governments, in partnership with international organizations and other relevant actors, to encourage schools to promote positive behaviour towards migrant workers and members of their families. The study highlighted a general lack of knowledge about migrant workers' rights. But public education on prejudice and diversity can shape attitudes towards migrant workers as well as change discriminatory social norms and stereotypical behaviours.

- Implement interventions to encourage more balanced and inclusive reporting, and to encourage the news media to use non-discriminatory terminology when reporting stories about migrant workers. News media are influential and impact the public's attitudes as well as policy-makers' agendas. Terms such as "undocumented" and "irregular" can be used rather than "illegal"; and "migrant" can be used rather than "alien". At all opportunities, humanize the individual representation of migrant workers and avoid descriptions that overemphasize the number of migrant workers or depict the migrant population as degrading the dominant culture.

2.3 **Continue to track shifts and trends in public support for migrant workers in countries of destination. Doing so will allow ongoing campaigns and other interventions to adjust to any changes in public attitudes. More frequent tracking of attitudes can also enable studies to identify causation of changes in public support for migrant workers.**

3. Harness the opportunities available given the high degree of public support for women migrant workers, including opportunities to address violence against women.

3.1 **Leverage the positive public support for ending violence against women migrant workers. Respondents showed high levels of support for access to shelters for women who experience violence and for stronger enforcement against violence.**

- It is recommended to work with governments, trade unions, and NGOs to ensure the availability of shelters and comprehensive services designed to meet the needs of women migrant worker survivors of violence.
- To ensure stronger enforcement against violence, it is recommended that governments work to align laws and policies with, and ratify, the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190).
- Governments, employers, trade unions, and NGOs should run campaigns to end violence and harassment in the world of work, including against migrant women and other marginalized groups. Awareness-raising and campaigning should form an important part of combined strategies linked to prevention of violence and harassment in the world of work.

3.2 **Leverage the public support for women migrant workers to receive maternity leave.** Policy change and/or enforcement is needed in migrant countries of destination to ensure women migrant workers have de jure and de facto access to maternity leave within broader social security schemes, and that women migrant workers are not discriminated against – either at work or during recruitment – on the grounds of pregnancy.

3.3 **Support increased realization of human and labour rights in the entertainment sector and the sex industry.** Labour protection mechanisms are needed to eliminate recruitment and employment misconduct and to prevent violence and exploitation for all migrant women (UN Working Group on Migration in Thailand, 2019).

3.4 **Support governments and employers to actively promote gender-sensitive policies and practices that tackle gender stereotypes and occupational segregation.** Strong gender segregation of occupation in the region is the result of stereotypical perceptions of what women can or cannot do, as well as the consequence of gender-differentiated barriers in access to specific job opportunities.

4. Address the declining attitudes of employers of domestic workers.

4.1 **Governments, trade unions, and other stakeholders, including domestic workers groups, should conduct a coordinated and evidence-based publicity campaign on the social and economic value of domestic work, and on the rights of domestic workers.** Domestic work is often undervalued, and often not fully considered as work, either by employers or through full inclusion in national labour laws.

4.2 **All stakeholders, including and especially the media, should use respectful terms to describe domestic workers.** They should avoid terms such as "servant", "maid", and "helper", and instead use "domestic worker", which squarely shows that domestic workers are workers, and not servile or part of the family.

4.3 **Leverage the positive public support for domestic workers to design and enforce regulations aimed at improving the working conditions of women migrant workers, as well as ratification of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).** Respondents showed high levels of support for recognition of care workers, improvement of the working conditions of domestic workers, and equal labour rights for domestic workers on par with nationals. Currently, none of the four countries in this study has ratified Convention No. 189.[2] Doing so would go far toward improving working conditions for domestic workers, as it allows for weekly rest for at least 24 consecutive hours, a limit on payment in kind, clear information on the terms and conditions of employment, as well as freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.

4.4 **Conduct further research to understand the knowledge, attitudes, and practices (work entitlements provided) of employers of migrant domestic workers.** Such a study is critical in light of the fact that employers today appear to show less support for migrant workers than before.

2 See ILO Normlex: Information System on International Labour Standards, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:1:0::NO::: [accessed 13 Mar. 2019].

Abbreviations and acronyms

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CHAID	Chi-square Automatic Interaction Detector
CSO	civil society organization
DEVAW	Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women
ESOMAR	European Society for Opinion and Market Research
GDP	gross domestic product
ILO	International Labour Organization
KAP	knowledge, attitudes, and practices
LGBTI	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex
MOU	memorandum of understanding
MYR	Malaysian Ringgit (currency)
NGO	non-governmental organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SGD	Singapore dollar (currency)
THB	Thai baht (currency)
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background: Attitudes towards migrant workers in Asia

In 2010, the International Labour Organization (ILO) conducted a large-scale public opinion survey of 4,020 nationals in four Asian migrant destination countries – the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand – to assess public attitudes towards migrant workers. The findings indicated somewhat greater support for migrant workers in the Republic of Korea and Singapore than in Malaysia and Thailand due to greater interaction with migrant workers in those countries. Overall, however, the 2010 survey findings revealed that the majority of respondents in all countries held unfavourable attitudes towards migrant workers (ILO, 2011).

In 2019, nearly a decade later, the TRIANGLE in ASEAN programme (ILO) and Safe and Fair programme (ILO and UN Women) have conducted a similar survey of 4,099 nationals to track trends of attitudes in three of the countries. One of the original four countries was changed – with the Republic of Korea replaced by Japan, given its emergence as an important destination country for low-skilled migrant workers in Asia.

1.1.1 Migrant workers in Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand

The number of documented migrant workers residing in the South-East Asia and the Pacific subregion is an estimated 11.6 million – 5.2 million of whom are women (ILO, 2018b). These statistics do not include irregular[3] or seasonal migrant workers, many of whom are employed in domestic work, entertainment, and agriculture. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is characterized by high rates of women's migration, with women and girls accounting for almost half (45 per cent) of the total migrant worker population in the region in 2017 (ILO,

3 There is no universally accepted definition of irregular migration. From the perspective of destination countries, it is entry, stay, or work in a country without the necessary authorization or documents required under immigration regulations. From the perspective of the sending country, the irregularity can be seen in cases in which a person crosses an international boundary without a valid passport or travel document or does not fulfil the administrative requirements for leaving the country.

2018b). Women migrant workers are making crucial contributions to destination countries as well as their countries of origin. In destination countries for ASEAN workers, there tends to be high demand for so-called "low-skilled" workers in sectors that typically have lower wages, many of which are women-dominated, such as care work, entertainment, services, and manufacturing subsectors such as electronics, garments, and seafood (UN Working Group on Migration in Thailand, 2019; ILO, 2017b; UN Women, 2017).

Compared with the other countries in the study, Japan has high ethnic homogeneity, and documented international migrants represent 1.8 per cent of the total population (of 126 million) (UN DESA, Population Division, 2017). However, immigration has become a relevant issue in Japan due to it having the fastest ageing population in the world; its population is predicted to shrink by one third over the next 50 years. This has implications for the national economy, and skilled migration has become critical for securing economic growth. Until recently, only highly skilled expatriates or diplomats could bring migrant domestic workers into the country – Japanese citizens were not allowed to employ migrant domestic workers (Reynolds and Aquino, 2017; Today, 2017). Migrant workers through the country's trainee scheme have not felt full protection under the law or its implementation (Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan, 2010). A law adopted in December 2018 established a number of measures to support about 350,000 new migrant care workers, as well as other workers in agriculture and manufacturing, into Japan (Shiraiwa, 2018; McCurry, 2018).

In Malaysia, in 2017 there were 2.2 million documented migrant workers (ILO, 2018a). Documented migrant workers made up 15 per cent of the labour force in 2017 (ILO, 2018a). The Malaysian central bank, Bank Negara, recently highlighted how the economy has generated demand for so-called "low-skilled" jobs "overwhelmingly filled by foreign workers" (Hwok-Aun and Yu Leng, 2018). Labour migration in Malaysia is frequently managed through temporary programmes, mainly for a limited selection of jobs. When migrant workers experience abuse and exploitation, it is often committed by both recruitment agencies and employers, and exacerbated by differences in the treatment of nationals and migrant workers (Ayub et al., 2016; The Equal Rights Trust, 2012).

Singapore has 1,368,000 migrant workers, comprising 42 per cent of its labour force (ILO, 2018a). To meet the needs of sectors such as domestic work, construction, ship repair, and construction (Bal, 2017), the employment of migrant workers is closely regulated. Even though migrant workers in Singapore are better protected than in many other destination countries, laws and public opinion are not entirely in their favour. Migrant domestic workers are excluded from Singapore's main labour law,[4] resulting in working hours going unregulated. Singapore does not have a minimum wage for any sectors. Like in Malaysia, women migrant workers are deported if found to be pregnant, and employers often restrict the movement of domestic workers, resulting in isolation and restricted ability to seek help when it is needed.

4 See Employment Act, chapter 91.

Thailand has a total of 2 million migrant workers, comprising 6 per cent of the country's labour force (ILO, 2018a). Most are employed in construction, agriculture, manufacturing, domestic work, fishing, seafood processing, entertainment, and the service sector (UN Working Group on Migration in Thailand, 2019). Although migrant workers are generally regarded as a short-term source of labour, they make a significant contribution to Thailand's social and economic development, contributing between an estimated 4.3 and 6.6 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) value in 2010 (OECD and ILO, 2017). Two migrant-reliant job sectors – agriculture and domestic work – are not fully protected under Thai labour law, resulting in long hours and pay at rates often below what workers in other sectors receive.

1.1.2 Negative attitudes towards migrant workers

Public debates on migration have become the subject of much concern in the past few years. Intolerance and xenophobia towards migrants have been used as a potent political instrument (Grosfoguel, Oso, and Christou, 2015; Miller-Gonzalez and Rensmann, 2010). The translation of negative sentiments towards migrants into discriminatory policies undermines the rights of migrant workers and defeats the efforts to maximize the social and economic potential of migration (OHCHR, 2014). Paying below the minimum wage, excessive overtime, and withholding passports are common practices that migrant workers regularly experience, while such treatment would be considered unacceptable for nationals (Tunon and Baruah, 2012).

Looking at Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand, it is evident that considerable portions of the public hold negative perceptions towards migrant workers. This amounts to or can easily translate into discriminatory behaviours towards migrant workers, reinforced by social norms and discriminatory laws, and exacerbated by social media and political propaganda. Analysis of English-language newspaper reporting in 2016 in Malaysia and Thailand found that the word "illegal" was the most common adjective used to describe migrant workers (ILO and UN Women, 2016). Media often inflame and exaggerate the situation, such as migrant workers being regarded as a threat to social order and national security (Derks, 2013).

Due to the rapidly ageing population in all four countries, there are increasing labour shortages. In Thailand, for instance, the contributions of migrant workers have become indispensable to the agriculture, manufacturing, construction, fishing, seafood processing, hospitality, domestic work, and tourism sectors, which drive much of the economy (Harkins and Ali, 2017; OECD and ILO, 2017; Martin, 2015). Yet, the public's negative perceptions are often in direct contradiction to the actual contribution made by these workers to destination economies.

There are, however, some signs of hope. A 2018 Gallup poll found that a majority of adults globally (54 per cent) across 143 countries surveyed said their cities or communities are good places for migrants to live. This is a jump from 2010 when from 47 per cent said the same. In South-East Asia, positive responses improved in the period from 32 per cent in 2010 to 40 per cent in 2018, though South-East Asia's positive response rate is the lowest in the world (Ray, Pugliese, and Esipova, 2019). Though there may be improvement in how welcoming people in the region see themselves, there is much work to be done, even to catch up with the global average or norm.

1.2 Women migrant workers in Asia

1.2.1 Positive and negative migration outcomes experienced by women migrant workers

As above, nearly half of the documented migrant workers in ASEAN are women. Women migrate throughout ASEAN seeking work, gaining skills, and experiencing new countries and cultures. Women migrant workers contribute significantly to the economic and social development in the countries of origin and destination. They send home remittances to ensure their families' livelihoods, education, and health care.

Yet, women frequently experience inequalities, exploitation, or gender-based violence during the migration process, compounding the prejudice and discrimination they experience as migrant workers. These forms of treatment are regularly found in less favourable work sectors, where migrant women are commonly clustered. So-called "women's work" – such as cleaning, care work, garment manufacturing, or even the tasks given to women v. men construction workers – is often undervalued, resulting in salaries that are lower than those for men migrant workers (ILO, 2017a). Some employers reported hiring women because they are considered to have "nimble fingers" and therefore presumed to be highly efficient in performing detailed, manual labour jobs. Again, this form of gendered work segmentation only underestimates the value of their work.

Women migrant workers face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination as women, as migrants, and on the basis of other identities: age, class, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, marital and family status, sexual orientation and gender identity, disability, health status, and pregnancy.

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As emphasized by the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General (2019), "This discrimination [faced by women migrants] affects the enjoyment by women and girls of their human rights and increases the likelihood that they will experience 'targeted, compounded or structural discrimination', including the risk of violence." Discrimination is not only seen in the attitudes of the public or among employers, but also continues into policy, including in the form of gender-based migration restrictions, moratoriums, or bans (ILO and UN Women, 2017). Such policies in the ASEAN region reflect the belief that decision-making about migration should be taken out of women's hands to protect them from abuses and violence. Yet, these policies do not address the structural labour rights and gender equality that must be in place to create enabling conditions where violence does not take place. Research has shown that the gender-based restrictions only leave women with the option of migrating irregularly, which then exposes them to greater risks that come with increased dependency on brokers and recruiters (ILO and UN Women, 2017).

1.2.2 Women migrant domestic workers in Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand

Among women migrant workers in South-East Asia and the Pacific, 39.2 per cent are domestic workers (ILO, 2015), and 83 per cent of domestic workers are women (ILO, 2016c).[5] Typically, domestic workers are employed in private households, often with unclear terms of employment, and they are generally excluded from national labour legislation. This is partially because domestic workers are commonly viewed as "part of the family" rather than as legitimate workers. The devaluing and lack of formalization of domestic work contribute to the sector not being afforded fundamental labour rights, such as a legislated and enforced minimum wage, regular working hours, overtime pay, social security, or freedom of movement (ILO and UN Women, 2016).

Unlike in the other countries covered by this study, migrant domestic workers are not particularly common in Japan. As previously noted, nationals were not allowed to employ migrant domestic workers until recently (Reynolds and Aquino, 2017; Today, 2017).

The situation of the estimated 300,000 or 400,000 migrant domestic workers employed in Malaysia is of concern due to lack of legal protection (ILO, 2017b). In the country's Employment Act (1955), domestic workers are classified as "servants, maids and helpers" and exempted from many protection measures granted under the law for other workers, such as paid leave, rest days, set work hours, sick leave, rest time, and maternity protection (ILO, 2018c). A new law is being drafted on domestic work in Malaysia. Furthermore, the Malaysian Government imposes policies that prohibit domestic workers from establishing permanent residence, reuniting with their family members, or marrying Malaysian citizens (Arifin, 2012). In a 2016 ILO–UN Women survey of Indonesian and Filipina domestic workers in Malaysia, 25 per cent

5 Article 1 of the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) defines domestic work as "work performed in or for a household or households". The term "domestic worker" means "any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship". Further, the Convention notes that a person who performs domestic work only occasionally or sporadically and not on an occupational basis is not a domestic worker.

reported no rest day and respondents worked an average of 14.4 hours per day (ILO and UN Women 2016).

The Singaporean Government recognizes the risks faced by migrant domestic workers, and punishments have increased under the penal code for employer offences, such as abuse, wrongful confinement, and sexual assault. Migrant domestic workers are protected by the Employment of Foreign Manpower Act and by the Employment of Foreign Manpower (Work Passes) Regulations. Employers of migrant domestic workers are required to buy personal accident insurance for each person hired, and to bear the cost of their workers' medical treatment (ILO, 2018c). Singapore also provides a mandatory settling-in programme to all migrant domestic workers after their arrival in the country, as well as an orientation for employers (Singaporean Ministry of Manpower, 2019). In a recent qualitative study, Myanmar domestic workers in Singapore reported working between 13 to 18 hours, and being on-call 24 hours a day. Some could not take their statutory day off per week. While other migrant workers can join (but not form) unions in Singapore, domestic workers are not allowed to unionize (ILO and UN Women, 2017).

Migrant domestic workers in Thailand have no access to social security (ILO (2016b), and many are undocumented. A 2015 study found that the majority of migrant domestic workers in Thailand migrated from Myanmar, and fewer than half possessed a work permit (Rattanapan, 2015). A 2012 ministerial regulation granted more rights to migrant domestic workers registered under the Labour Protection Act (1998) (ILO, 2018c). However, the ministerial regulation still excludes domestic workers from many provisions of the law, such as social security coverage and paid maternity leave (ILO and ADB, 2014).

In light of the above context and background on migrant workers in Asia, the goal of this 2019 public attitudes study is to assess public attitudes towards migrant workers, with added foci on women migrant workers and domestic workers. The study aims to examine the influencing factors that shape attitudes over time. The findings lead to a number of recommendations for potential interventions to mitigate the public's negative opinions of migrant workers.

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2. Research approach

The 2019 study was undertaken through a mixed method approach, primarily via a public survey, which was complimented by semi-structured interviews and a desk review of secondary literature.

The study had the following objectives:

1. To establish an up-to-date knowledge base on public attitudes towards migrant workers in four Asian destination countries for ASEAN migrant workers.
2. To provide an evidence base with which to design interventions to promote a more positive image of migrant workers.
3. To determine how support of migrant workers has changed over time by comparing results with the 2010 ILO public attitudes survey.
4. To provide recommendations to tripartite-plus stakeholders (governments, trade unions, employer associations, plus civil society organizations) on actions they can take to improve public attitudes towards migrant workers in their countries.

2.1 Research scope

The study surveyed the general population in four migration destination countries: Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand. Survey topics included:

- the degree to which people have interaction with migrant workers;
- knowledge, attitudes, and practices in relation to migrant workers;
- attitudes and issues that affect women migrant workers;
- employment of migrant domestic workers;
- social norms;
- media consumption; and
- demographics.

Selected questions about entitlements and salary were asked of respondents who employed a migrant domestic worker (see Appendix I for the survey questionnaire).

Key informant interviews with government representatives, employers, workers' representatives, CSO representatives, and journalists were carried out in each of the four destination countries to supplement the survey findings and to gain qualitative insight into whether attitudes are shared by stakeholders and what can be done to change or influence attitudes over time. The semi-structured interviews and background literature review enabled triangulation and contextualization of survey results.

The current study built on results of a similar survey of public attitudes towards migrant workers in the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand conducted in 2010. The majority of the 2010 questions were repeated in the 2019 survey, to identify longitudinal changes in public attitudes. A critical change to the research approach was to include Japan as a target country rather than the Republic of Korea. Japan has recently emerged as an important destination country for migrant workers in Asia.

Another change to improve the methodology was to collect data through an established access panel (explained below) in all four countries. The 2010 study used access panel data collection in the Republic of Korea and Singapore, and face-to-face interview data collection in Malaysia and Thailand (see details in section 2.2.2). The change to all data collection through an access panel enables more nationally representative and uniform data. In addition, a focus on attitudes towards women migrant workers, which was not covered by the survey in 2010, was added to the research scope.

2.2 Data collection methods

A survey questionnaire was developed for the general public, and an interview questionnaire was developed for key informants.

2.2.1 Document review

The project team conducted a document review to better understand migration patterns and the public discourse in each country. Literature review covered recent studies on attitudes towards migrant workers generally and women migrant workers in particular. An initial document review was conducted in November 2018, followed by additional reviews to explore specific issues. These document reviews helped the project team develop the data collection tools and analyse findings.

2.2.2 Survey with the general public

A well-established access panel was used to conduct the attitude survey with the general public in each of the four countries. An access panel is a group of pre-screened respondents who have expressed a willingness to participate in surveys sent to them via the Internet. Quality panels are typically large, and panel members are verified before they join. Because most panels are skewed towards younger and urban segments of the population, screening

criteria and sample quotas were used to extract a more representative sample. Table 1 shows the size of the panel in each country.

The survey targeted the general population aged 18–65 year, covering all major regions in each country, including rural areas and small towns. Access panels, however, have stronger coverage in urban areas. To ensure better coverage of rural areas and small towns, a 30 per cent rural quota was imposed for Japan, Malaysia, and Thailand.[6] This does not fully compensate for the large urban and rural divide in Thailand, and is thus a known limitation of the study. A gender quota was also applied to ensure equal representation between men and women across regions in each country. The survey was conducted between December 2018 and January 2019. The total sample across the four countries was n=4,099 persons. Table 1 illustrates individual country samples, disaggregated by gender.

Table 1. Sampling plan and sample size

Country	Panel size[a]	Coverage	Sample size[b]	Men	Women
Japan	588 000+	national	1 051	526	526
Malaysia	125 000+	national	1 009	504	504
Singapore	48 000+	national	1 005	502	503
Thailand	136 000+	national	1 034	517	517
Total			**4 099**	**2 049**	**2 050**

Notes: a = Total persons available on the access panel; b = Total persons who participated in the survey.

In 2010, the data collection method used for Malaysia and Thailand was face-to-face interviews, with the sample coverage limited to four states and territories in Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Pahang, and Perak) and to four provinces in Thailand (Bangkok, Surat Thani, Chiang Mai, and Samut Sakhon). The 2010 sample in Malaysia represented 5,370,125 people, or 23 per cent of the population. The 2010 sample in Thailand represented 6,530,202 people, or 10 per cent of the population (table 2).

Shifting to a nationwide sample for 2019 through the access panel resulted in a better representation of the population. As shown in table 2, the regions and states selected in 2019 cover a much larger proportion of the population, representing more than 60 per cent of the populations in Malaysia (61 per cent) and Thailand (67 per cent).

6 This does not apply to Singapore because it is regarded as 100 per cent urban.

Table 2. Geographic sample coverage, proportion of total population, 2010 and 2019

Malaysia states 2010	Population[a]	Proportion of population	Malaysia regions 2019	Population[b]	Proportion of population
Kuala Lumpur & Selangor	3 423 556	15%	**Central**	7 106 460	26%
Pahang	706 919	3%	**East coast**	3 919 135	14%
Perak	1 239 650	5%	**North**	5 895 694	21%
Total	**5 370 125**	**23%**	**Total**	**16 921 289**	**61%**
Thailand provinces 2010	**Population[c]**	**Proportion of population**	**Thailand regions 2019**	**Population[d]**	**Proportion of population**
Bangkok	4 259 525	6%	**Greater Bangkok**	10 831 988	16%
Surat Thani	715 818	1%	**South**	9 399 578	14%
Chiang Mai	1 200 689	2%	**North**	12 098 164	18%
Samut Sakhon	354 170	1%	**Central**	11 869 296	18%
Total	**6 530 202**	**10%**	**Total**	**44 199 026**	**67%**

Source: a, b = Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2010; c, d = Department of Provincial Administration in Thailand, 2018.
Note: The percentages may not add up to a 100, as they are rounded off to the nearest integer.

However, this change means that results are not exactly comparable to those of 2010. To determine the impact of the change in methodology, sub-samples were created for Malaysia and Thailand that correspond to the 2010 sample. The sub-samples were composed of respondents from regions containing the provinces and states selected in 2010, as shown in table 2. This enabled comparison of survey results between the 2019 sub-samples and the 2019 overall national sample to determine if significant differences existed. See table 3 and figure 1 below.

Table 3 shows the profile of the national samples and sub-samples in Malaysia and Thailand. The rural and urban area profiles, gender profiles, and age profiles are fairly close, with only two percentage points difference in the Thailand urban–rural profile and one percentage point difference in the Thailand gender profile. In Malaysia the gender and age profiles are the same, and there is a four percentage point difference in the urban-rural profile.

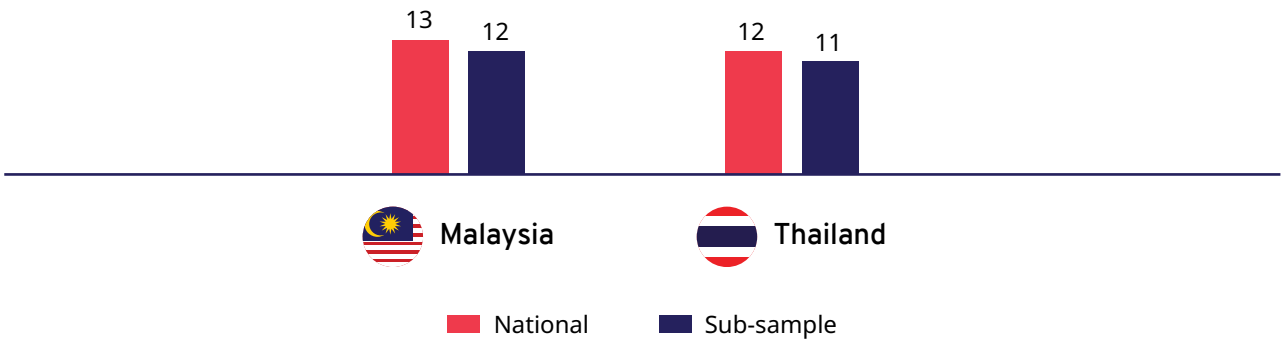
Table 3. Structure of the 2019 national samples and sub-samples in Malaysia and Thailand

Malaysia (national)		Malaysia (sub-sample)	Thailand (national)		Thailand (sub-sample)
Region	%	%	Region	%	%
Central	25	41	Bangkok	16	28
North	22	35	Central-East-West	18	16
East coast	14	24	North	18	31
South	18	-	Northeast	33	-
Territory/other	20	-	South	14	24
Total	100	100	Total	100	100
Sample size (n)	1008	619	Sample size (n)	1034	604
Urban	67%	63%	Urban	65%	67%
Rural	33%	37%	Rural	35%	33%
Male	50%	50%	Male	50%	49%
Female	50%	50%	Female	50%	51%
Age 18–29	35%	35%	Age 18–29	27%	27%
Age 30–44	35%	35%	Age 30–44	35%	35%
Age 45+	30%	30%	Age 45+	38%	38%

Note: The percentages may not add up to a 100, as they are rounded off to the nearest integer.

When comparing KAP[7] Index (see section 3.4 on KAP Index) results between the national samples and the sub-samples, no statistical differences were found (see figure 1), suggesting attitudes to migrant workers are less influenced by provincial/state locations and more likely to be determined by other factors, such as the level of interaction with migrant workers. However, the absence of significant differences does not mean they do not exist, rather, that there is no evidence that they do. Some caution should still prevail when comparing certain results, which is pointed out where appropriate throughout the report.

Figure 1. KAP Index, by country 2019 (national and sub-sample)



7 KAP stands for "knowledge, attitudes, and practices".

To have cross-country comparable results, one survey tool was designed for use in all four countries. However, questions on ethnicity were localized to each country. The survey was translated by the research team, and the translation was checked by a second set of translators for accuracy before scripting and uploading the survey to an online site. A test link was set up to test the online survey for errors. Interim data were also examined as a validity check before fully launching the survey.

Following completion of data collection, it became evident that the age distribution of respondents was not in line with the national population (table 4). This was particularly the case in Thailand, and thus to correct for this, the panel provider was asked to carry out an additional 31 interviews with older respondents in Thailand, now reflected in the total sample. Nonetheless, the data for each country was weighted to bring it in line with the national population. Because the survey target was the general population aged 18–65 years, population data for the age weighting exercise was based on that sub-population (i.e., did not include under 18s or over 65s). A multiple-variable weighting scheme was applied, based on the size of each region, with an equal distribution between men and women and among age groups (see table 3). To avoid having too many cells in which to calculate individual weights, which would have resulted in oversized weights that could have biased the data, age categories were limited to three and region categories were limited to five, with smaller regions and territories combined. The categories were structured to have as even of a sample distribution across them as possible, allowing for greater statistical power when conducting sub-segment analysis. For Singapore – a relatively small, urban island – weights were calculated based on ethnicity (ethnic Chinese, Malay, Indian, and other) instead of region. The population distributions by region for Japan, Malaysia, and Thailand – and by ethnicity for Singapore – were obtained from available national statistical data (see table 4).

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Table 4. Data weighting scheme

Japan weight variables	Study sample (%)	Weighted sample to reflect national data (%)	Malaysia weight variables	Study sample (%)	Weighted sample to reflect national data (%)	Singapore weight variables	Study sample (%)	Weighted sample to reflect national data (%)	Thailand weight variables	Study sample (%)	Weighted sample to reflect national data (%)
Sex			**Sex**			**Sex**			**Sex**		
Men	50	50	Men	50	50	Men	50	50	Men	49	50
Women	50	50	Women	50	50	Women	50	50	Women	51	50
Age			**Age[c]**			**Age[f]**			**Age[h]**		
18–29	17	21	18–29	36	35	18–29	27	24	18–29	43	27
30–44	40	35	30–44	49	35	30–44	42	32	30–44	39	36
45–64	44	44	45–64	15	30	45–64	31	44	45–64	17	38
Region[a]			**Region[d]**			**Ethnicity[g]**			**Region[i]**		
Hokkaido & Tohoku	10	13	Central	32	25	Chinese	83	76	Greater Bangkok	40	16
Kanto	39	37	North	17	21	Malays	8	15	Central, East & West	18	18
Chubu	13	21	East coast	9	14	Indian & other	9	9	North	12	18
Kansai	21	18	South	16	18				North-East	16	33
Chugoku & otherb	17	11	Territory & othere	27	20				South	13	14

Notes: b = Skikoku, Kyushu, and Okinawa; e = Sabah, Sarawak, and the Federal Territory of Labuan.

Source: a= National Institute of Population and Social Security Research in Japan, 2015; c, d = Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2010; f, g = Department of Statistics Singapore, 2014; h, i=Department of Provincial Administration in Thailand, 2017.

Note: The percentages may not add up to a 100, as they are rounded off to the nearest integer.

2.2.3 Stakeholder interviews

Interviews with tripartite and civil society organization (CSO) stakeholders in each country were conducted over the phone, except for some in-person interviews in Thailand. A total of 24 key informants were interviewed among government, employers' bodies and individual employers, workers' organizations, CSOs, and journalists.[8] Data collection via phone was chosen for the sake of practicality, and native-speaking moderators were used so that all interviews could be done in the language of the participants. Five interviews were conducted in Japan, six in Malaysia, six in Singapore, and seven in Thailand.

2.3 Gender-responsive approach

Gender was considered throughout the entire process of conducting the attitude survey, making sure issues specific to women migrant workers were included and that a gender-responsive approach was applied (see table 5).

Table 5. Gender-responsive approaches

Stage	Gender-responsive approach
Project team	▪ Included gender equality expertise in research and writing team members. ▪ Women and men represented in research team management.
Desk review	▪ Attention was given to gender equality and women-specific issues.
Method	▪ Equal numbers of men and women research respondents were targeted.
Questionnaire development	▪ Ability to have gender-disaggregated data. ▪ Included topics particular to women migrant workers' situations and concerns.
Data collection	▪ Gender-equal representation and participation were ensured.
Analysis and report	▪ Results were disaggregated by gender of survey respondent, with gender differential implications highlighted and analysed where applicable.

8 The questionnaire is available upon request to the ILO.

2.4 The KAP Score model and shifting attitudes[9]

Producing quantitative data to show positive outcomes is quite straightforward for so-called "hard" projects, such as civil infrastructure construction works, which typically have tangible outputs (Youker, 2003). However, projects that promote and enforce migrant workers' rights usually produce much less tangible, observable, and measurable outcomes. Thus, where direct measures are not feasible, there is a need for meaningful proxy indicators that are representative of change having occurred (Lindgren and Kelley, 2019).

There is no one particular behaviour that people need to adopt that indicates clear positive support for migrant workers. Instead, a number of issues must be considered, many of which relate to being more open-minded and inclusive, with positive support for migrant workers shown across a range of indicators related to knowledge, attitudes and behaviours. "Behavioural compliance", or "behavioural shifts"[10], as distinct from observable "behaviour change", is about reducing demand or avoiding certain risks, which may be unobservable and impossible to directly attribute to an intervention. In such cases, there is no direct link to outcomes, and verification via observation becomes near impossible (Lindgren and Kelley, 2019).

The KAP Score model was inspired by the principles of stage theory and, in particular, the trans-theoretical model, which describes how an individual approaches behaviour change through a series of discrete stages (DiClemente, 2007). Based on answers to questions about knowledge levels, attitudes, and practices or behaviours towards migrant workers, the KAP Score model approximates five stages of change, moving people from a position where they:

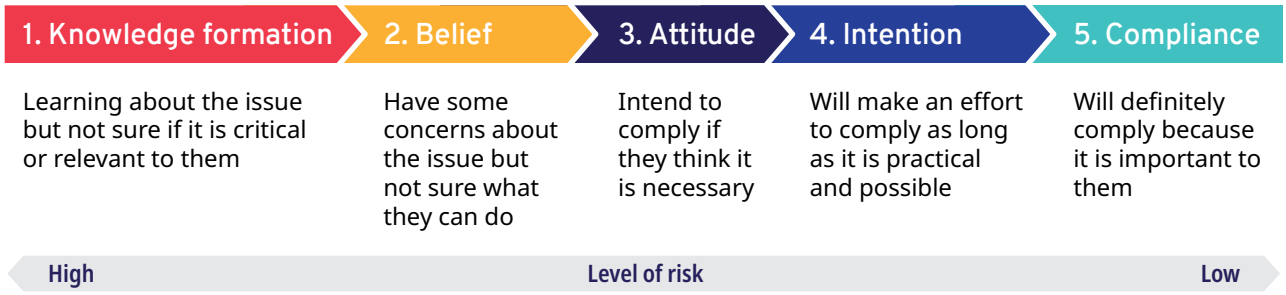
1. start learning about the issue;
2. start having concerns;
3. change their attitude;
4. develop an intention to positively shift behaviour; and, finally,
5. display consistent positive behaviour (figure 2).

One objective of the study is that findings can inform interventions by the UN, government, workers' organizations, employers' organizations, and civil society. The model prescribes that efforts to change attitudes or build support towards migrant workers be directed towards people who are considered to be at risk of discriminating against them, i.e., those who are typically found at the lower stages of change. Thus, work can target those without knowledge first; followed by work to change attitudes; and finally, reinforcement of positive behaviour. As people move through the stages of change, the risk of them displaying negative behaviour towards migrant workers is gradually reduced.

9 The KAP Score model developed by Rapid Asia Co., Ltd. is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-No Derivatives 4.0 International License. There are no restrictions in terms of copying, distributing, displaying or performing the work.

10 This publication will use the terms 'behavioural compliance' or 'behavioural shifts' as traditional behavioural change models focus on very specific behaviours that can be observed or verified.

Figure 2. Five stages of change in the KAP Score model



A single intervention can seldom move a person through all the stages but can potentially bring them to a point at which they have formed an intention to comply, provided there are no physical or environmental barriers to prevent them from doing so. In the case of attitudes towards migrant workers, social norms represent a potential barrier that can prevent people from openly showing support for migrant workers.

Since the ILO 2010 public attitudes survey, the Rapid Asia research team has made modifications and improvements to the KAP Score model. The number of questions used, question formulation, and scales have become more standardized to ensure more uniformity between different KAP studies conducted by Rapid Asia for various UN agencies and other stakeholders. Thus, the KAP Score data for the 2010 survey was re-analysed to bring it up to date with the current model. In 2010, seven knowledge and eight attitude questions were used (ILO, 2011), and these were reduced to five each, along with the current standard, for the re-analysis and longitudinal comparison. The KAP Index scale was also adjusted to be comparative to the current range, which resulted in the KAP Index being reduced by 10 points. The KAP Segmentation used in 2010 was represented by three segments, and it was recalculated to the five stages of change used today. For more detail about the KAP Score model, see section 3.4.

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2.5 Ethics considerations

The research firm, Rapid Asia, is a member of the European Society for Opinion and Market Research (ESOMAR) and is thus obliged to follow well-established, international best practice for professional conduct for data collection and data management. The guidelines, norms, standards, and code of conduct under ESOMAR cover:

1. Ensuring that those involved with collecting data are independent and act with integrity and honesty when interacting with all target groups and stakeholders.
2. Ensuring that all participants in the survey understand the purpose, objectives, and the intended use of survey findings.
3. Being sensitive to social and cultural norms and gender roles during interactions with participants and their families.
4. Respecting the rights and welfare of participants by ensuring informed consent and rights to anonymity and confidentiality before the interview, that consent is freely volunteered, and that participants can withdraw at any time without any negative consequence.
5. Limiting storage of any personal data to a maximum of six months, keeping such information secured to avoid access by any third party.

Survey respondents had already voluntarily signed up to be a member of the access panel before this research started. Key informant interviews began with a process of informed consent, covering interview topics and the purpose of the study, as well as interviewees' right to decline to answer any questions or end the interview at any time. Assurances of confidentiality were given, and respondents were given the chance to ask any questions about the interview. Interviews were tape recorded, and subsequently deleted following writing of the study.

2.6 Limitations

Attitudes to migration can vary significantly by different segments of the population. Therefore, caution should be exercised in claims of homogenous "public attitudes".

Because an online access panel was used, the sample selected cannot be regarded as a probability sample. Panel members have an inherent skew towards urban residents and those with Internet connections. For this reason, the resulting sample included on average those with more education and social media connections than the public at large. To mitigate the effect of this, a 30 per cent quota for rural areas and small towns was imposed in all countries except Singapore. This, however, did not fully compensate for the actual urban–rural split in Thailand. The challenge of rural representation was compounded by panel members being less active on the Internet in rural areas (and thus less participative and harder to engage in panel surveys).

For the 2019 survey, Japan was included as a target country instead of the Republic of Korea. Thus, no previous results exist for Japan, and there was no meaningful way to understand how attitudes towards migrant workers may have changed since 2010. To have clarity and continuity between the two surveys, only Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand were included

when looking at findings related to the KAP Index results and how they had changed since 2010. Results for Japan, however, are included in all other sections of this report.

It is important to note that the method used is not a panel survey, which would measure the same participants over time, for complete comparability. Relatedly, as noted in section 2.2.2, in the 2010 survey, a face-to-face survey methodology was applied for Malaysia and Thailand. In 2019, the samples taken were national, as opposed to selected in only four states in Malaysia and three provinces in Thailand. To have confidence in a reasonable comparison, sub-samples were created for Malaysia and Thailand that corresponded to the 2010 sample, made up from regions containing the provinces and states selected in 2010.

Interviews with stakeholders were limited to a total of 24, represented by government, employers' bodies and individual employers, workers' organizations, CSOs, and journalists. The findings from these interviews cannot be regarded as representative of the various stakeholder groups but were included to complement and add qualitative, contextual analysis to the quantitative data. However, to ensure their views were presented with a reasonable level of balance, the findings presented in this report are those that were mentioned by multiple stakeholders. Quoted comments included are representative of multiple respondents who stated similar views.

As in 2010, the survey introduction did not define the term "migrant workers" for the respondents, in terms of income or skill level of the migrant workers. Hence, survey respondents may have understood the term to refer to low- or high-income workers with low or high levels of skill. Skill level was defined however in the questionnaire section on attitudes, with a question on need for "low-skill" migrant workers. In key informant interviews, almost all stakeholders associated migrant workers with those doing low-skill jobs.

While the survey allows for understanding attitudes and mapping change at national levels, it does not allow for identification for how or why attitudes have changed, i.e., causality. It is not able to capture whether specific events have directly led to change. At any time during the nine-year interval between studies, news reporting about migrant workers, political factors and discourse, or economic labour market shifts could have caused shifts in public support. There is a higher chance of identifying these with yearly or even shorter intervals of measurement.

Finally, the study is only a survey in countries of destination. However, attitudes in countries of origin can also be problematic for migrant workers. There is some evidence that policy-makers and the public in ASEAN countries of origin view migration as unsafe or a brain drain on the country and want to deter migration as a solution (ILO and UN Women, 2017). This attitudinal position provides no incentive to policy-makers to invest in making migration any safer.[11] Further studies could be conducted in countries of origin to fill gaps in knowledge on public attitudes throughout the entire migration cycle, i.e., attitudes affecting migrant workers before migration and upon return.

11 Participant intervention, Changing Attitudes and Behaviour Towards Women Migrant Workers in ASEAN Technical Regional Meeting, Safe and Fair Programme, 26–27 November 2018, Bangkok.

3. Findings

To understand the level of public support that exists towards migrant workers, individual knowledge, attitudes, and practices need to be considered. Together, they help to explain the extent to which the contributions of migrant workers are recognized and appreciated. The findings in section 3.1 explore public support and attitudes related to several themes: Labour market shortages; migration and crime; social and cultural threats; equal treatment with nationals; violence against women migrant workers; domestic work; and the entertainment sector. Section 3.2 looks at social norms in the four countries and how these norms affect behaviour. Interaction with migrant workers and level of interaction with them is then explored in section 3.3. In section 3.4, the KAP Score model is used to contextualize what drove support of migrant workers (in this study) and how support of them has changed over time. Finally, section 3.5 looks at respondents' media use.

3.1 Public support for migrant workers

3.1.1 Labour market shortages: Need for migrant workers

Migrants fill labour shortages in key sectors – such as manufacturing, domestic and care work, services, and agriculture. In Japan, 85 per cent of employers say they have difficulty filling vacancies. In Singapore, 47 per cent do (APEC, 2014). In Malaysia, World Bank modelling suggests that a 10 per cent net increase in so-called "low-skilled" migrant workers may increase Malaysia's GDP by up to 1.1 per cent. Further, for every 10 new immigrant workers, up to five new jobs may be created for Malaysians, two of them women (World Bank, 2015). As per the map below, dependency ratios (shares of the non-working population in relation to the working population) through the region are changing. Higher dependency ratios suggest there are gaps in the labour market generally (with fewer workers per population), and there may be gaps especially with regards to care, as care needs are high with increased children and/or elderly populations (see figure 3).

Figure 3. Change in working-age people needed by 2030 to keep dependency ratio at 2016 level[a]

a. The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the ILO, the Secretariat of the United Nations, or United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city, or area or its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Source: *The Economist,* 2017, as cited in UNDP, 2018.

The public in the countries surveyed agree that there is a need for more workers (the question did not specify migrant workers) for so called "low skilled" work in their countries. Respondents were asked if the country has a need for more workers and were given the option to answer that the country did not need workers, needed "high skilled" workers, needed "low skilled" workers, or "not sure". Below 15 per cent in each country said that the country did not need any workers. And, more respondents in all countries said the country needed more "low skilled" workers than "high skilled" workers: 32 per cent in Japan saying there is a need for more "low skilled" workers (as opposed to 16 per cent in favour of "high skilled"), 44 per cent in Thailand for "low skilled" (vs. 21 per cent for "high skilled"), 53 per cent in Malaysia for "low skilled" (vs. 20 per cent for "high skilled"), and 59 per cent in Singapore for "low skilled" (vs. 14 per cent for "high skilled") (Appendix 2).

When similarly asked if there is a need for low-skilled migrant workers, answers differed, with fewer Malaysians saying there is a need (38 per cent, versus 53 per cent when only speaking of workers generally). More Japanese and Singaporeans said there is a need for migrants specifically (51 per cent v. 32 per cent of Japanese, and 70 per cent v. 59 per cent of Singaporeans). Thais gave a consistent answer (42 per cent saying there is a need for migrant workers and 44 per cent for workers in general) (Appendix 2). We can see then that the Japanese, Singaporean, and Thai public recognize that migrant workers are needed to fill the labour shortages they see in the country. In Malaysia on the other hand, while half the public see there is a shortage, less than half think it should be filled by migrant workers.

Several stakeholders interviewed acknowledged that their country has a labour shortage and the economy depends on migrant workers. They mentioned the high need for migrant workers in particular sectors, such as construction, fishing, agriculture, and domestic work. Destination countries often view migrant workers in terms of their capacity to fill jobs that would otherwise not be taken up by local workers, who have moved into employment that offer higher pay and better conditions. Indeed, Malaysia and Thailand have measures to restrict migration to general labourer categories in specified occupations, and require proof otherwise from hiring employers that they tried but could not find nationals to fill jobs. Research in Thailand suggests public attitudes directly impact government policy towards restrictions, setting quotas for admission by sector based upon employer requests under memorandum of understanding (MOU) agreements with countries of origin (Harkins and Ali, 2017). While protection of jobs for nationals in occupations where there are less shortages, or in sensitive and strategic occupations, is common everywhere in the world, in Malaysia and Thailand middle-skilled jobs, where there are shortages, are not open for migrant workers under MOUs.

> **"[Migrant workers do] low-skill jobs that locals don't want to do."** (Journalist, Singapore)

> **"Unskilled migrant workers fill a very important gap, as it is very difficult to find unskilled locals."** (Employer, Singapore)

Japan's immigration policy, on the other hand, has historically allowed skilled migrant workers but restricted the employment of "low skilled" migrant workers, allowing entry primarily only through the Technical Intern Training Programme. In December 2018 a new immigration law was passed, opening a visa scheme to allow entry to manual workers, who can stay for five years with visa renewal options, but whose families are not allowed to join them. They must pass a series of skill tests as well as a language test before entry. Specific work sectors, including food services, cleaning, construction, agriculture, fishing, vehicle repair, and industrial machinery operation, are included.

> **"The current Japanese migration policy does not allow any unskilled workers to work in Japan, even though there is a shortage for unskilled workers."** (Academic, Japan)

Care economies[12] in Asia are significant and growing as populations age. In South-East Asia alone the population of older people is expected to more than double by 2050, from 64 million in 2019 to 168 million (UN DESA, Population Division, 2019). In Japan as of 2017, the old-age dependency ratio was the highest out of all Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, with a ratio of 50 persons over 65 years old for every 100 persons aged 20 to 64 (OECD, 2018). Many households in destination countries employ a migrant domestic worker who may cook, clean, tend gardens, and/or care for children, the elderly or disabled persons. A forthcoming ILO study forecasts care needs, and estimates that in Thailand by 2034, twice the number of migrant domestic workers will be needed (ILO, forthcoming a). Thailand's economic development will create care work, but without adequate planning for labour and skills needed, the country may face a care crisis, pulling national workers out of the work force, reducing the national paid labour force.

Employing someone to conduct household work allows women nationals to enter paid work, with migrants thus making a major contribution to society and the economy. This is not always valued, however, with some persons interviewed in Malaysia believing migrant domestic workers are a "drain" on the economy. Malaysian employers and a journalist highlighted that because migrant domestic workers remit their salary to their families in the country of origin, they do not contribute to the economic development of host countries. Their indirect contribution, allowing national women to work, may be a connection that few people make when comparing with, for example, construction workers, whose work is perceived as contributing to the economy through the infrastructure projects they help build. One interviewed stakeholder (per the quote below) noted that migrant domestic workers should not have the same benefits as national workers because then nationals would be hired instead and migrants would be out of a job. This suggests the respondent feels they are doing domestic workers a favour by keeping their wages depressed so that employers can afford to hire them. Yet, nationals do not want to do care work and indeed have a high demand for hiring care workers, with gaps in the care economy well documented (ILO, forthcoming a).

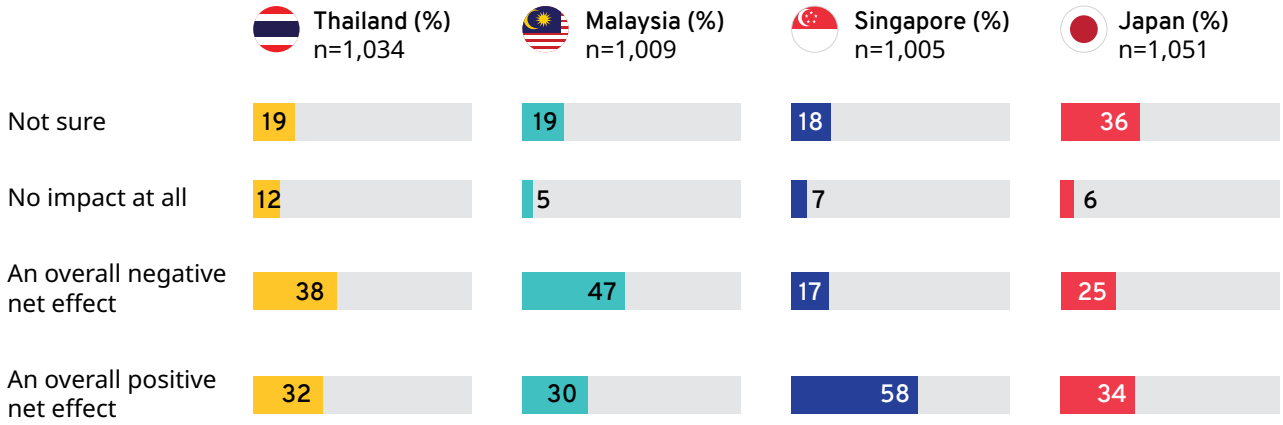
> **"Domestic workers should not get the same benefits [as national workers] because if we give them minimum wage like normal workers, the employers will not hire them and hire [national] workers from a cleaning service company instead. This would have negative effect on the migrant workers."** (Government official[13])

12 Care economies cover all forms of care work, which is broadly defined as consisting of activities and relations involved in meeting the physical, psychological, and emotional needs of adults and children, old and young, frail and able-bodied (Daly, 2001), and also includes the activities involved in social reproduction.

13 Country anonymized.

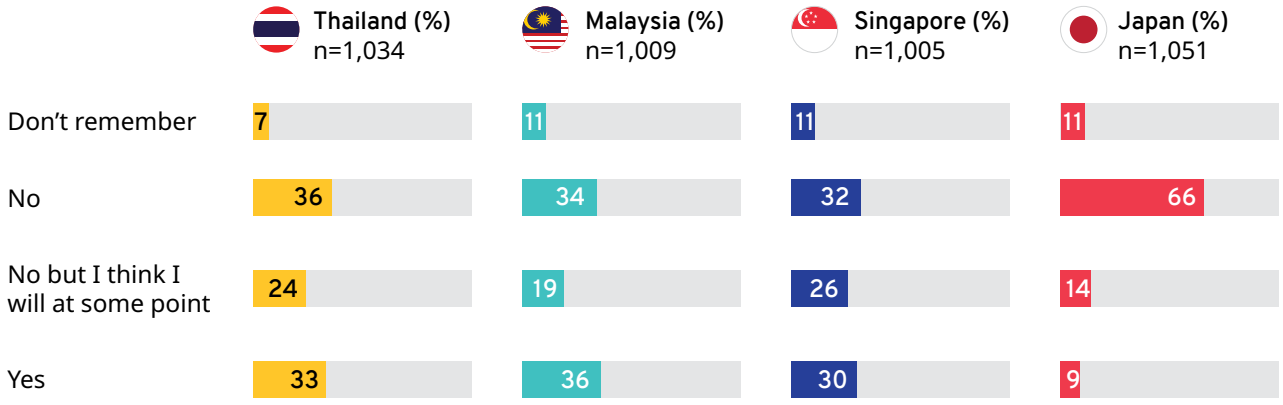
The survey also asked about whether migrant workers more generally (not only domestic workers) were viewed as a "drain on the economy". A minority in all countries expressed this sentiment, with 30 per cent in Singapore, 32 per cent in Japan, 40 per cent in Thailand, and 47 per cent in Malaysia saying that migrant workers are a "drain on the economy" (figure 25). When asked this question from a different angle, asking if migrant workers had a net negative, neutral, or positive effect on the economy, answers in countries were fairly consistent in terms of respondents who answered that migrants have a net negative effect (see figure 4). Though in Singapore this less emotive framing (i.e., not using the word "drain") resulted on only 17 per cent of the public thinking that migrant workers had a net negative economic effect, versus 30 per cent when the word "drain" was used in the question. Nonetheless, per figure 4, respondents (except in Singapore) were not willing to go as far as say that they think migrant workers have a net positive effect on the economy.

Figure 4. What effect do migrant workers have on the national economy?



Note: The percentages may not add up to a 100, as they are rounded off to the nearest integer.

Figure 5. In the past 12 months, did respondents speak to friends or colleagues about some positive contribution migrant workers make to their country?



Note: The percentages may not add up to a 100, as they are rounded off to the nearest integer.

When asked if respondents have spoken (in the last 12 months) or would speak to friends or colleagues about some positive contribution migrant workers make, a slim majority of respondents in all countries but Japan answered positively (see figure 5). In Thailand, 57 per cent of people have spoken or would speak about positive contributions of migrant workers; in Singapore 56 per cent; in Malaysia 55 per cent; and in Japan 23 per cent. The low rate of migrants in Japan (1.8 per cent, as per UN DESA, Population Division, 2017) may mean that there have not yet been opportunities for nationals to see and understand what migrants' positive contributions are.

While generally majorities of the public (albeit slim majorities in some places) will speak about the positive contribution of migrants and do not view migrants as having a negative effect on the economy, a majority of the public in Malaysia (69 per cent) think their country should make it more difficult for migrant workers to enter and work. Higher barriers to entry, however, would result in fewer migrant workers able to contribute to these economies and fill known labour market shortages.

3.1.2 Migration and crime: Unfounded fears

The 2010 study found that in Thailand nearly 80 per cent of local respondents believed that migrants commit a "high number of crimes", and in Malaysia this figure was over 80 per cent. These levels have dropped to 72 per cent of Thais responding similarly in 2019 and 59 per cent of Malaysians (figure 25). This is a positive trend regarding a very negative attitude towards migrants. However, in 2019 a second question was added asking about increases in crime rates due to migration. Seventy-seven per cent of Thai respondents said that migrants have caused the crime rate to go up, as did 83 per cent of Malaysians. The figures are 52 per cent in Japan and 52 per cent in Singapore (Appendix 2).

The relationship between labour migration and crime, however, is an issue not well understood by people in general. There is little evidence to back up the claim that migrant workers are more likely to commit crimes than the rest of the population, unless lack of documentation is considered a crime. There are very few studies on this issue, and most are in Europe or

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North America, showing that there are slightly higher percentages of crime among migrants generally, but not among migrant workers (Özden, Testaverde, and Wagner, 2015, as cited in World Bank, 2015).

In fact, recent evidence of the causal impact of migration on crime finds that migrant workers in Malaysia reduce both property and violent crime. An increase of 100,000 migrant workers in Malaysia reduces crimes committed by 9.9 percent (World Bank, 2018). Police statistics in Singapore show that the arrest rate for work permit holders was reportedly 227 per 100,000 people, compared to 435 per 100,000 for Singapore residents (Othman, 2008). In Thailand's Tak province, an analysis of the incidence of different crimes showed that migrants were less likely to commit crimes than nationals (study by Sirikarnjana as cited in Paitoonpong, 2012).

Regarding migrant workers and crime, interview respondents in this and other recent studies have had mixed opinions. Some believe that migrant workers do commit more crimes and associate areas inhabited by foreigners as having more crime.

> **Roppongi is an area that has a lot of migrants, so it tends to have a lot of crimes."** (Employer, Japan)

> **The person who does domestic work earns a lower income and there is a possibility they could be associated with crime. It is possible that the person can bring someone in to rob us. I am worried."** (Employer, Thailand)[14]

Others argued that the connection between migrant workers and crime is fictional, not based on facts.

> **I haven't seen any evidence of the crime rate going up because of migrant workers. It's more of an imagination of people. In fact, if you speak to migrant workers, they're actually the victims of crime, like the exploitation from the authorities."** (Journalist, Malaysia)

> **There's no proof to say that foreigners commit crimes. Mostly, they come here to work and not to get punished. As [migrants] are lower skilled, local people have bias towards them, so they think that migrant workers committed crimes."** (NGO staff, Singapore)

3.1.3 Social inclusion vs. social and cultural threats

The term social inclusion has often referred to the inclusion of all persons into various facets of society, including work and community life. The opposite, social exclusion, is created via "closed spaces for certain groups that are remote and cut off from the community, with special rules, and always with a lower status" (ILO, 2003). The ILO has understood social exclusion as

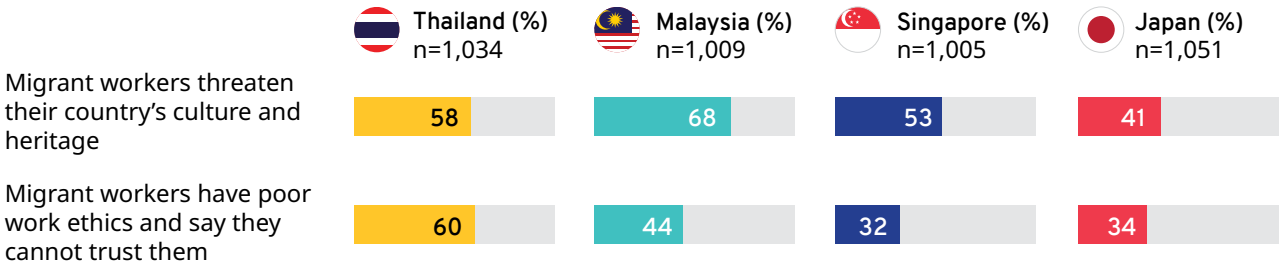
14 Quote from ILO and UN Women, 2016.

a process "which gradually distances and places persons, groups, communities and territories in a position of inferiority in relation to centres of power, resources and prevailing values" (ILO, 2003).

Thus, attitudes that perceive migrant workers as criminals, as per above, or otherwise label migrant workers negatively, place them in social positions of inferiority. Laws that create special rules for migrant workers enshrine social exclusion, as well as discrimination, systemically. Thus, public support for such laws, as seen in the next section, is a cause for concern.

This study found respondents tend to perceive that migrant workers threaten their country's culture and heritage (Malaysia, 68 per cent; Thailand, 58 per cent; Singapore, 53 per cent), though in Japan the figure is somewhat lower at 41 per cent. Many say migrant workers have poor work ethics and say they cannot trust them (Malaysia, 44 per cent; Japan, 34 per cent; Singapore, 32 per cent). In Thailand this figure is notably high at 60 per cent, suggesting trust building in Thailand should particularly be a target of any interventions (see figure 6). This has been the case in Thailand for some time, with the majority of respondents to a 2006 poll, commissioned by the ILO and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), agreeing that the Government should not admit more Myanmar migrant workers due to the threat they pose to Thai society (Sunpuwan and Niyomsilpa, 2014).

Figure 6. Perceptions of migrant workers as social and cultural threats

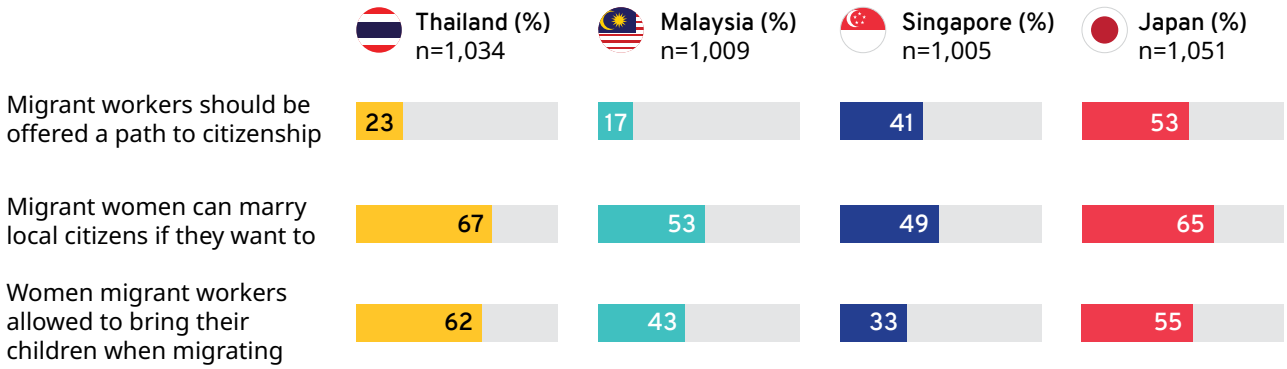


Note: Figures include those who agree and strongly agree.

A survey question also asked about migrant workers adapting to living in the country. Across all four countries, there was uniform agreement that migrant workers with regular status can adapt better than those without. People with irregular status were seen to be less able to adapt. This matches the reality that migrant workers with irregular status fear going out in public, as arrest, detention, and deportation are possible outcomes should they be too visible or encounter authorities. Efforts to ensure that labour migration governance mechanisms are accessible, affordable, and not time consuming are important to ensure that migrant workers can access documentation before entry, and not be pushed to consider irregular options that are faster and cheaper (ILO, 2017a)

Social theorists define "active" social exclusion as deliberate decision making to exclude someone from a social good (Sen, 2000). The Mekong Migration Network notes in a study on migrants' social exclusion in Japan and Thailand that in relation to migrant workers this includes exclusion from public welfare schemes such as social security, health care, and education, as well as denying settled migrants the right to family reunification (MMN 2016). The public were surveyed on whether migrant women should be allowed to marry citizens or bring children with them when they are migrating, as well as attitudes on offering migrants a path to citizenship (see figure 7), neither of which are allowed for low-skilled migrant workers in Japan,[15] Malaysia, or Singapore. Thailand does not restrict marriages and though children are not part of documented MOU immigration processes, in law they are given access to the Thai education system regardless of status. This is consistent with past surveys.

Figure 7. Support for issues related to social inclusion



The survey also measured public behaviours to enable inclusion, with positive results where the majorities in all countries except Japan said they had or would help a migrant integrate into their community or get ahead in their work (Thailand, 74 per cent; Singapore, 62 per cent; Malaysia, 57 per cent; and Japan, 39 per cent), and that they had spoken or would speak out against someone who was saying offensive things about migrants (Malaysia, 70 per cent; Thailand, 58 per cent; Singapore, 54 per cent; and Japan, 26 per cent) (figure 27).

3.1.4 Equal treatment

Equality of treatment is enshrined in countless international human rights instruments and labour standards. The ILO Equality of Treatment (Accident Compensation) Convention, 1925 (No. 19) and the ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) are clear in guaranteeing migrant workers labour rights and working conditions on par with nationals.

15 Via the Technical Intern Training Program

These rights must be guaranteed in law because they are not the norm in terms of public attitudes. Migrant workers are often seen as temporary workers giving little incentive for employers or those implementing policy to ensure migrants receive their rights, particularly where a significant proportion of national citizens do not want that (Harima, 2018).

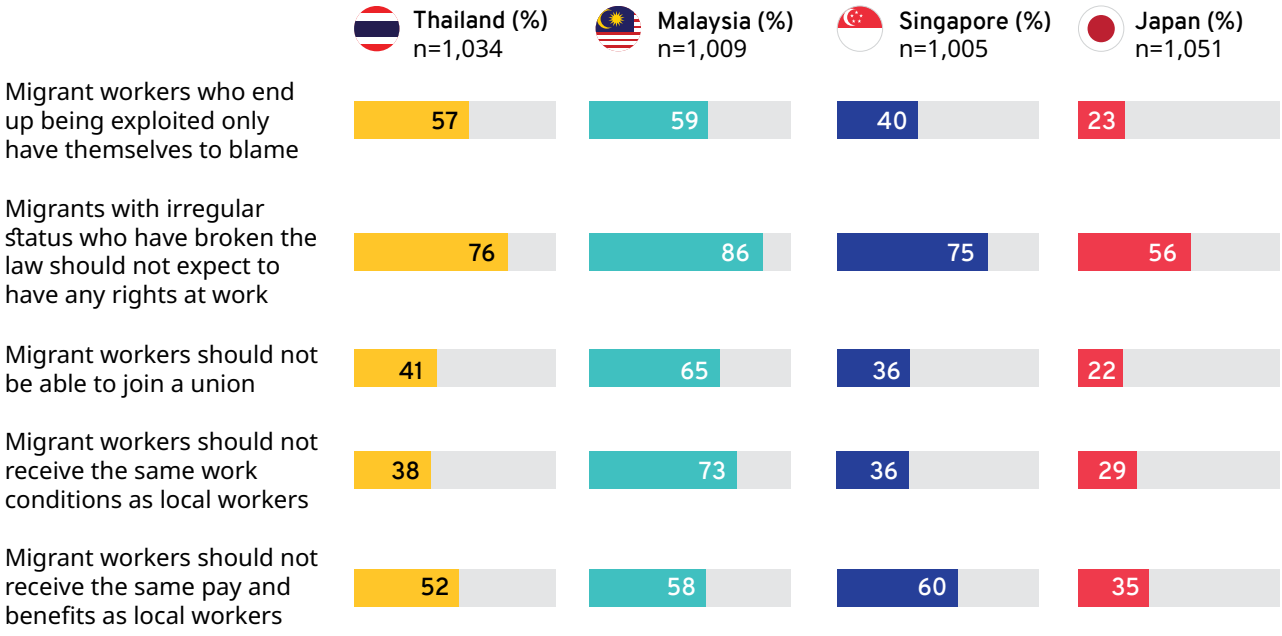
Indeed, the majority of the public in three countries surveyed were of the view that migrants cannot expect the same pay or benefits as nationals for the same job, as shown in figure 8. This view was particularly strong in Singapore (60 per cent) and Malaysia (58 per cent), followed by Thailand (52 per cent) and then Japan (35 per cent). Some of the more dominant negative attitudes among the four countries were that:

- migrant workers should not have any rights at work if in irregular status;
- they should not receive the same salary and benefits as national workers;
- if they are exploited they have themselves to blame; and
- if they are irregular they cannot expect rights at work (see figure 8).

These attitudes indicate that citizens across the four countries hold a fundamental view that migrant workers should be treated differently, and that discrimination is not a problem. When asked whether women migrant workers specifically should have equal wages with women nationals doing the same job, only majorities in Japan (60 per cent) and Thailand (60 per cent) supported this (see figure 9).

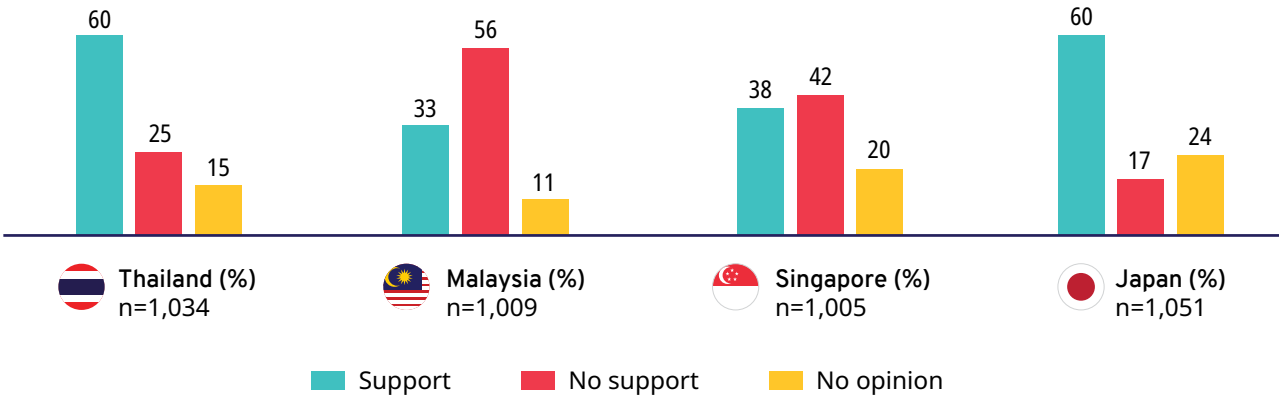
> **"Women migrant domestic workers should have the same pay as men [migrant workers] but not the same pay as Singaporeans."** (Journalist, Singapore)

Figure 8. Public attitudes on equal treatment with nationals



Note: Percentages given are an aggregate of 'Agree to some extent' and 'Agree completely'

Figure 9. Support for equal wages for national and migrant women who are doing the same job



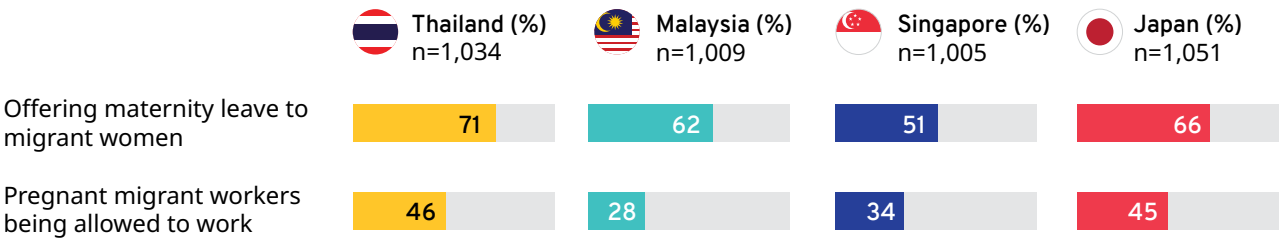
Note: The percentages may not add up to a 100, as they are rounded off to the nearest integer.

3.1.4.1 Maternity leave and pregnancy-based discrimination

All four countries of destination in the study have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Article 11(2) of CEDAW requires States "to introduce maternity leave with pay or comparable social benefits" and "dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave" is prohibited. Nonetheless maternity leave for women migrant workers is not a norm in the region, and dismissing women migrant workers (and indeed women nationals) from work upon pregnancy is not uncommon (Rannveig Mendoza, 2018; ILO, 2016a; ILO and UN Women, 2017). Indeed, Singapore has applied the following reservation to CEDAW Article 11: "Singapore considers that legislation in respect of article 11 is unnecessary for the minority of women who do not fall within the ambit of Singapore's employment legislation."

The majority of the public in all four countries do support offering maternity leave to migrant women, however. This is a significantly positive show of support for women migrant workers in Asia. Yet, on the other hand, survey respondents do not support women migrants being allowed to work while pregnant (see figure 10), a contradiction in sentiment. If women are not allowed to become pregnant and keep their jobs through to births, then they would not be able to access employer- and/or government-paid maternity leave schemes that the public support.

Figure 10. Support for maternity leave and pregnant migrant workers



In Malaysia, 62 per cent of respondents said that women migrant workers should have maternity leave. In Singapore this figure is 51 per cent. Yet, in Malaysia and Singapore, women migrant workers are subjected to not only contract termination but also deportation if they become pregnant (Elias, 2018). In Japan and Thailand, women migrant workers are protected by law from pregnancy discrimination.

Malaysia and Singapore have also imposed legal restrictions, subjecting women migrant workers to pregnancy discrimination and sanctions during all the phases of their migration: recruitment, employment, and termination. Women are required to perform a pregnancy test prior to departure from their home country and to repeat it on an annual basis. Should the test be positive, the woman will be deported at her own expense (Rannveig Mendoza, 2018). Some stakeholders tended to agree with these policies.

> **"I do not support that women should be allowed to work while pregnant. The law does not allow them to get pregnant; if they get pregnant, they will be deported."** (Journalist, Singapore)

> **"Women workers should not be entitled to maternity leave because they should not get pregnant while working."** (NGO staff, Malaysia)

Women migrant workers are also subject to pregnancy tests in Thailand. But the results of the tests are not to be used to restrict their employment or to deport them. According to officials, the test is performed for medical reasons related to administration of a medicine that protects women from disease (Rannveig Mendoza, 2018). The Thai Government offers prenatal and postnatal care to pregnant workers from Cambodia, the Lao Peoples' Democratic Republic, and Myanmar, provided employers have enrolled them in Social Security. Once born, their children are also eligible to remain in Thailand and by law can access medical care and attend local schools.

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3.1.5 Violence against women migrant workers

The June 2019 International Labour Conference adopted the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) and the associated Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 (No. 206), which concern themselves with the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work and which recognize the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment. The Recommendation requires member States to take legislative or other measures to protect all migrant workers, in particular women migrant workers, regardless of migration status, from violence and harassment in the world of work. The 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAW) defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women and girls, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" (Article 1).

In ASEAN countries, documented studies find lifetime intimate partner violence ranges from 6 per cent in Singapore, to 44 per cent in Thailand (UN Women, 2018). Violence against women is grounded in unequal power relations between women and men that can be reinforced and perpetuated during the migration cycle. Women migrant workers are concentrated in low paid and informal sectors, with limited social protections, including limited access to services for violence against women. Without protections, women migrant workers can face higher incidences of economic exploitation and gender-based violence.

In this study, a policy area that encountered a high level of support across the four countries was access to shelters for women who have experienced violence (see table 7). Shelters provide support services, including access to medical care, skills development, and psychosocial support. CEDAW and DEVAW provide a comprehensive institutional framework for State obligations for shelter support in cases of violence. The Beijing Platform for Action echoes this, and the UN Special Rapporteur (UN SR) on violence against women, its causes and consequences recently outlined guidance via a 2017 report: A human rights-based approach to integrated services and protection measures on violence against women, with a focus on shelters and protection orders (UN SR, 2017).

Particularly when migrant women have experienced violence including trafficking, holistic, integrated, and quality services, as well as avenues for justice and redress must be in place when women want and need them. Shelter support should be ensured, and given priority over mandatory detention related to immigration enforcement. Further, shelter stays should be voluntarily accessed and available, and should not be compulsory, or a type of detention. The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) further notes in the "Principles and guidelines, supported by practical guidance, on the human rights protection of migrants in vulnerable situations":

> Migrants should not be obliged to stay in closed shelter facilities, whether these are operated by government or private actors. Residential facilities for migrants should not restrict migrants' day-to-day movements unnecessarily. It is not permissible to restrict the movement of women, children, LGBTI[16] migrants, persons with disabilities, or other groups of migrants on the grounds that they might face sexual, gender-based or other violence or harm inside or outside a facility. Take steps to avoid and prevent migrants – especially women, children, LGBTI migrants and persons with disabilities – from being de facto restricted in their movements due to fear of sexual, gender-based or other violence or harm, inside or outside the facility (OHCHR, 2018, p. 50).

Stakeholders interviewed in Singapore agreed that women migrant workers who have experienced violence should have access to shelters and mentioned that there are shelters for survivors of abuse and exploitation operated by NGOs. Yet, they also pointed out that the general public does not fully appreciate that abuse and violence are not limited to the physical. Emotional abuse and threats of violence can be just as harmful. As the quotes below show, however, support for shelters is not unqualified, and domestic workers who might be at fault, or indeed who are not nationals, may be seen as undeserving of shelter.

> **"Nobody would give shelter to migrant workers running away from abusive employers. People think the employers are the ones responsible for the conditions of their workers, and the migrant worker shouldn't run away. It's more likely they will get help from the embassy."** (NGO staff, Malaysia)

> **"Some people might be less supportive because they think that even Thai people still do not have access to the shelter when they get abused, [so] why will the migrant workers get that benefit first? Access to shelters must be improved and provided first to Thai [people]."** (Journalist, Thailand)

Table 6. Knowledge about women migrant workers who experience violence

Countries	They quietly accept it (%)	They seek help from the police, gov't, or their embassy (%)	They seek help from NGOs or fellow migrant workers (%)	They often don't report it because they are afraid (%)	Not sure (%)
Thailand	14	15	20	35	16
Malaysia	11	14	19	47	9
Singapore	18	17	18	40	7
Japan	6	21	22	26	25

Note: The percentages may not add up to a 100, as they are rounded off to the nearest integer.

16 LGBTI refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex individuals.

Table 7. Support for migrant women having access to shelters if they experience violence and stronger law enforcement to reduce violence against migrant women

Country	Migrant women having access to shelters if they experience violence (%)	Stronger law enforcement to reduce violence against migrant women (%)
Thailand	85	83
Malaysia	81	82
Singapore	79	77
Japan	68	67

One challenge facing migrants who experience violence is that they often do not report it. The survey found that most respondents in Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand were aware of this problem. In Japan, however, more respondents believed migrant workers who experience violence would report the abuse (see table 6).

There is evidence to suggest negative attitudes towards women migrant workers create barriers to their access to essential services in cases of violence against women (ILO and UN Women, forthcoming). Women migrant workers may struggle to access services due to perceptions around their respectability or due to victim blaming. Pervasive negative attitudes can also further isolate migrant women, restricting their movement and preventing them from seeking support due to fear of reprisals. Attitudes held by the migrant women themselves may discourage them to seek help, where they may see violence as a normal part of labour migration or may be afraid of the stigma that may be attached to them if they report the violence (ILO and UN Women, 2019).

> **"It is hard for [migrant women] to live in the country when they cannot believe in the police or security forces."** (Former migrant interpreter in a Malaysian electronics factory)[17]

3.1.6 Domestic workers: Same treatment, better protections

The ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) obliges States parties to provide domestic workers with conditions including:

- reasonable hours of work;
- weekly rest for at least 24 consecutive hours;
- a limit on payment in kind;
- clear information on the terms and conditions of employment; and
- respect for the fundamental principles and rights at work, including freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.

17 Quote from ILO and UN Women, 2019.

The accompanying Domestic Workers Recommendation, 2011 (No. 201) outlines additional rights protection measures, including social security.

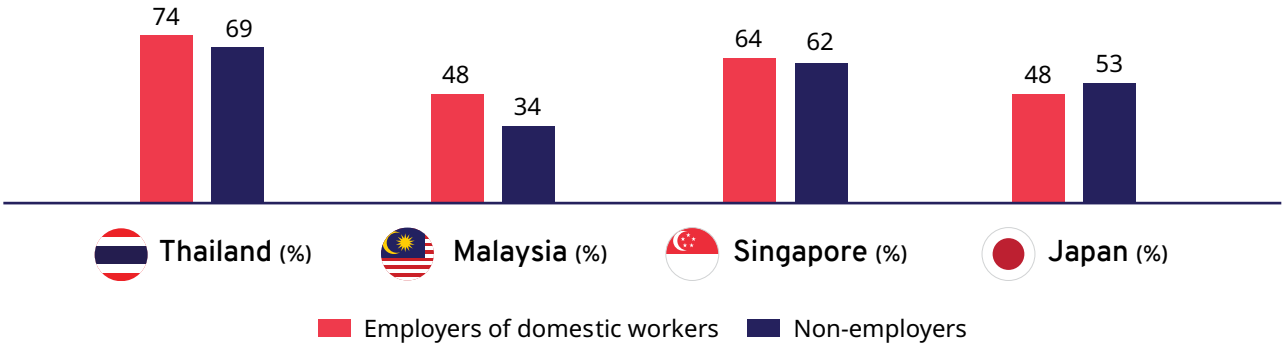
Domestic work throughout Asia continues to be underpaid, with long hours of work. The sector is not afforded labour protections on par with workers in other sectors, and is often explicitly excluded from labour laws (ILO and UN Women, 2016). Exclusionary policies as well as employment practices can be correlated directly with attitudes held around domestic work and women's work. When asked whether migrant domestic workers enjoy the same benefits as other workers, roughly half or fewer of the respondents in all four countries were aware that migrant domestic workers do not have the same benefits as other workers (Singapore, 51 per cent; Japan, 31 per cent; Malaysia, 26 per cent; and Thailand, 17 per cent). The majority of respondents assumed they have the same work benefits or were not sure. Japan had a seemingly large proportion of respondents who said they don't know (at 55 per cent); while in Malaysia and Thailand, there was a fair amount of misconception, with more than one third of the respondents thinking work benefits are the same for all workers (Malaysia, 37 per cent; Thailand, 42 per cent) (figure 23).

While employment in other sectors is usually determined by a contractual relationship in which both parties are equal, domestic workers are often seen as "part of the family" (ILO and UN Women, 2016). This attitude towards domestic work as familial rather than employment-based is also held by government officials, who have noted that since domestic workers are part of the family, labour authorities cannot inspect their employers and social security is inappropriate (ILO and UN Women, 2016). Further, domestic workers are often considered "charity cases", and their employment is alleviating poverty, rather than fulfilling a vital function within the home. This is linked to the practice of some employers engaging poorer relatives for domestic work. Employer attitudes around domestic workers also include the idea that domestic workers do not work a lot of the time, and that their work is easy. This can have implications in relation to the number of hours domestic workers are expected to work, limiting their rest time and overtime payment.

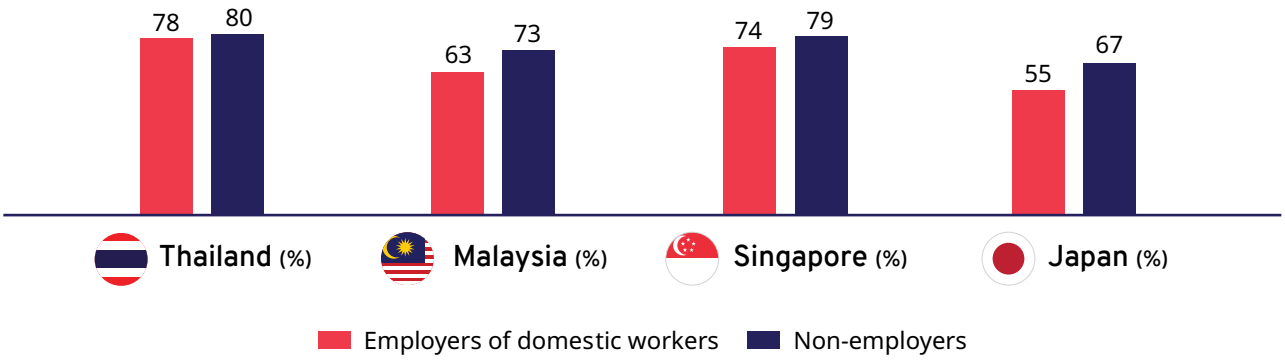
While this study shows (in the next subsection below) that employers do not treat migrant domestic workers well in practice, there is wider public support for migrant domestic workers to have better conditions, and for recognition of care work as a profession (see figure 11).

Figure 11. Support for migrant domestic workers: Employers of domestic workers compared to non-employers

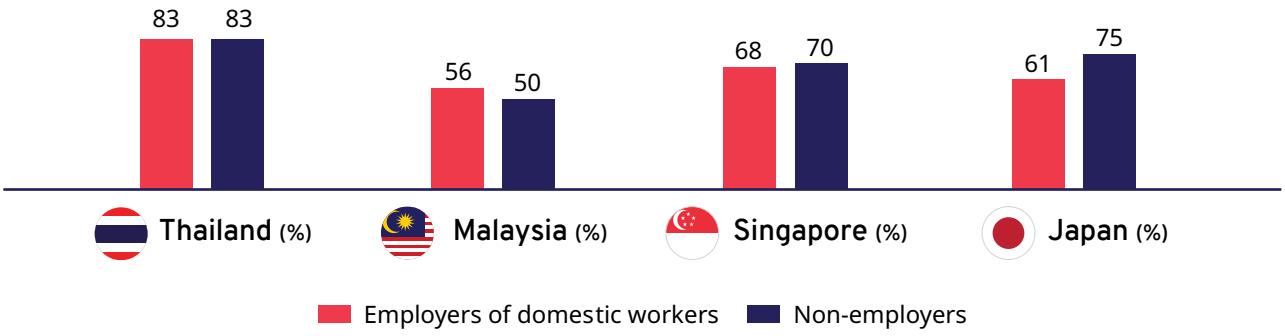
Support for providing the same labour rights to migrant domestic workers as other workers



Support for improved labour conditions for domestic migrant workers



Support for recognition of care work as a formal profession



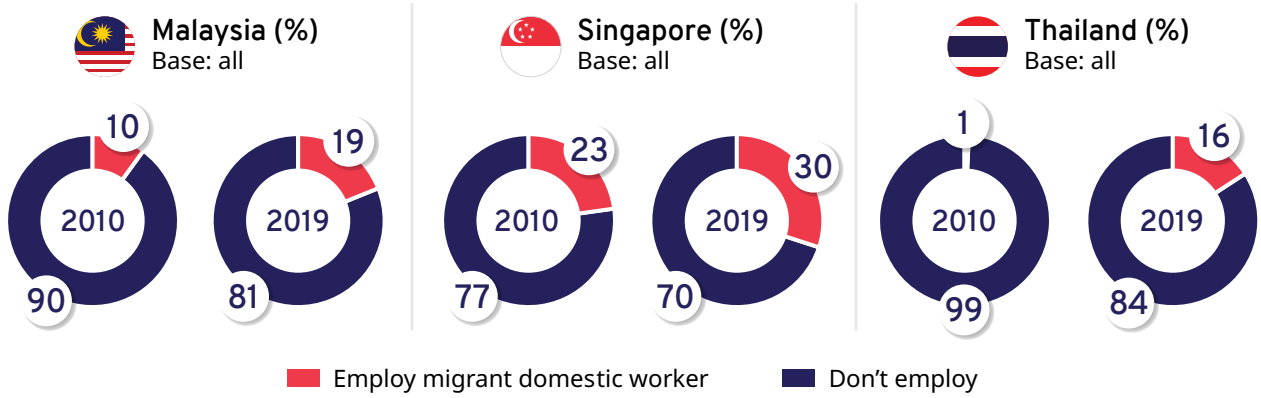
Base: all respondents

3.1.6.1 Employers' treatment of migrant domestic workers

More people today are hiring migrant domestic workers than ten years ago. The survey respondents were asked if they employed a migrant domestic worker, and increases were found in all three countries surveyed in the 2010 public attitudes study (figure 12). The increase in Thailand was 15 percentage points and was evident in both urban and rural areas. Increases in Singapore (7 per cent) and Malaysia (9 per cent) were also seen. Noticeably, a larger proportion of employers was found in urban areas than in rural ones (Malaysia, 23 per

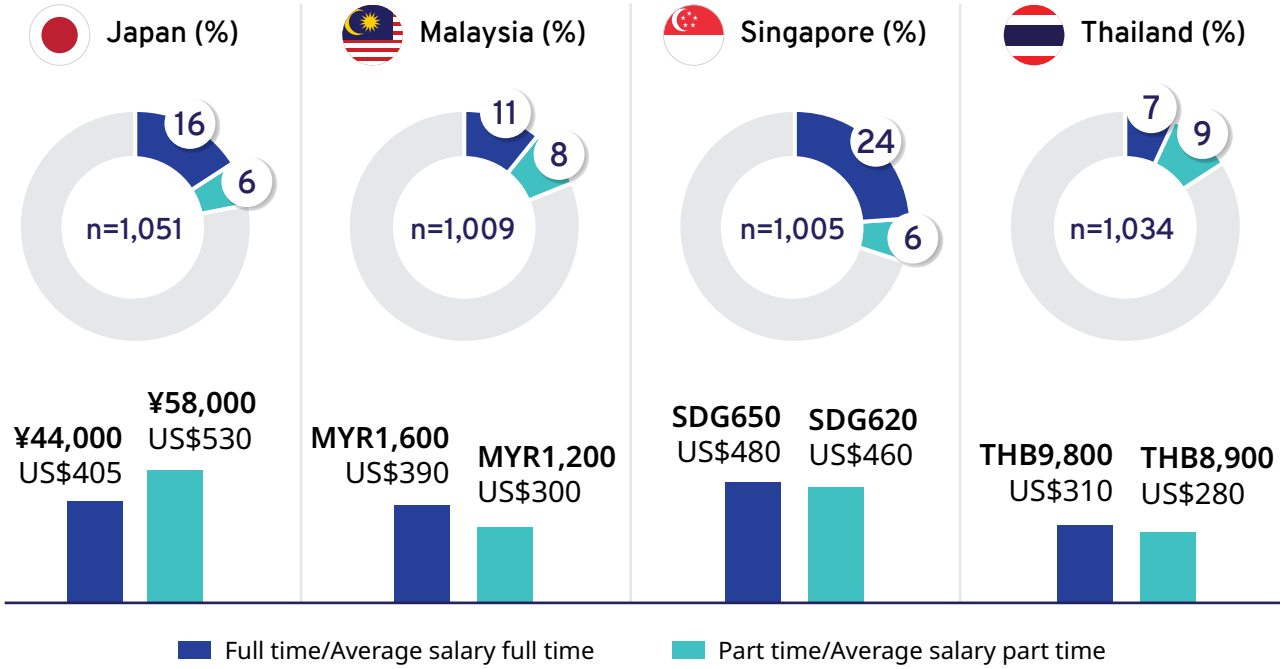
cent urban and 11 per cent rural; Thailand, 18 per cent urban and 12 per cent rural).[18]

Figure 12. Change in employment of migrant domestic workers



Quite a few of the surveyed respondents had employed migrant domestic workers (figure 13), either on a full-time or part-time basis: in total, 30 per cent in Singapore; followed by 22 per cent in Japan; 19 per cent in Malaysia; and 16 per cent in Thailand. The average of the salaries they paid varied quite substantially, both within countries and between them. Converting salaries into the US dollar equivalent, the average Singaporean employer reported paying nearly US$500 per month, followed by Japan and Malaysia, at around $400, and then Thailand, with slightly more than $300 (figure 13). The salary paid for part-time work was generally lower, but was found to be higher in Japan due to part-time workers often working for a professional service provider.

Figure 13. Employment of migrant domestic workers and average salary paid

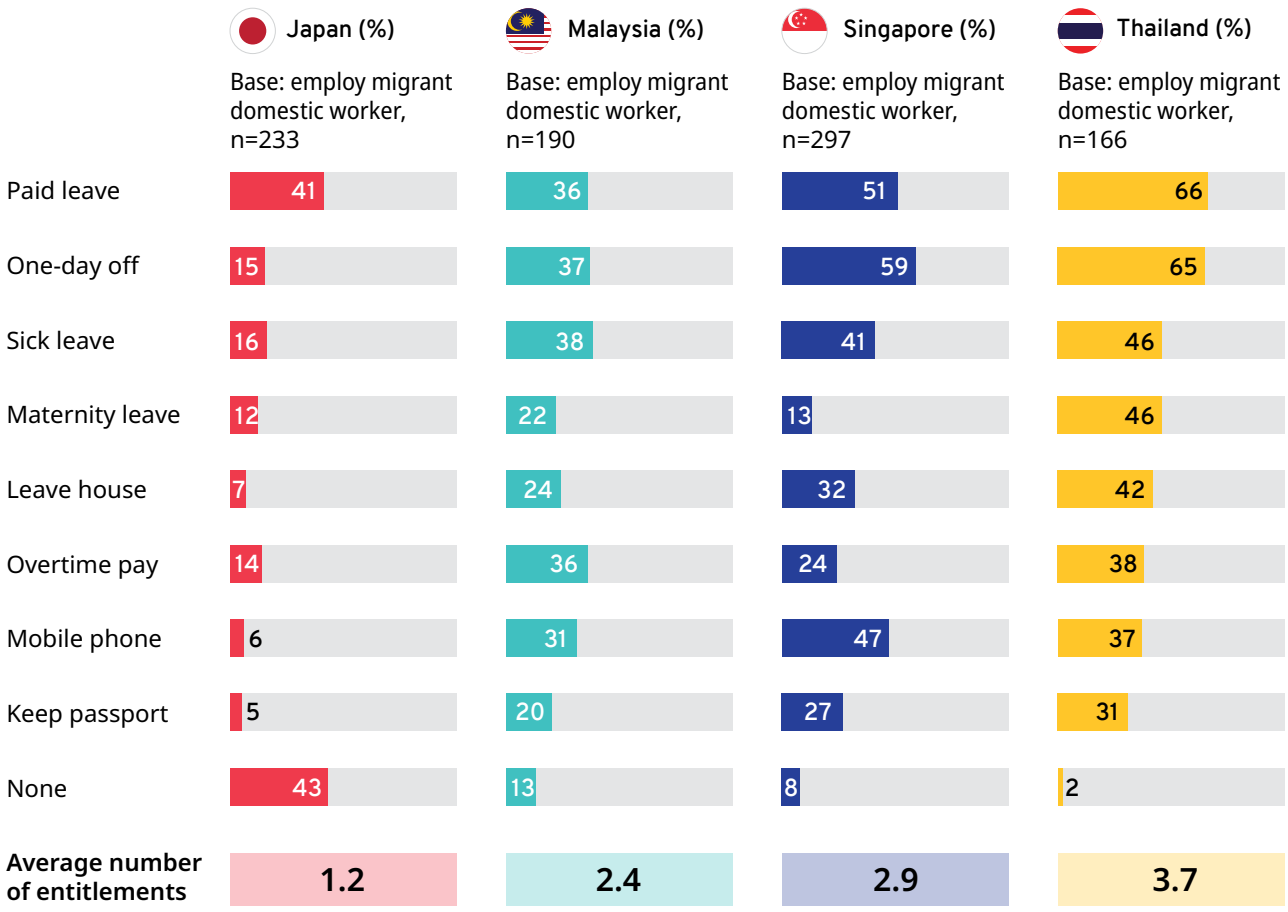


18 Singapore is a city-state and thus not disaggregated by rural or urban populations in this study.

Singapore does not have a minimum wage, and the minimum wages in Japan, Malaysia, and Thailand do not apply to migrant domestic workers. The Malaysian Government has agreements with some countries, such as the Philippines, regarding a minimum wage and other terms of employment (Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, 2016; Caram Asia, 2010). Malaysian employers who were interviewed cited the current economic downturn as the reason they did not pay the domestic worker they employ the minimum wage determined by bilateral agreements or that is applicable to other sectors.

Considerable variation emerged among responses of employers of migrant domestic workers regarding work entitlements (figure 14). In Thailand, when presented with a list of eight entitlements they could provide the domestic worker they employ, employers said they provide an average of roughly four entitlements, while in Singapore it was nearly three, two and a half in Malaysia, and one in Japan. Some 43 per cent of Japanese employers of domestic workers said they did not provide any entitlements. With the exception of Japan, the most commonly provided entitlements were paid leave, sick leave, and one day off per week. Maternity leave, while uncommon, was most frequently cited by employers in Thailand.

Figure 14. Work entitlements provided to migrant domestic workers



The survey asked the same question about employers' practices in both the 2010 and 2019 public attitudes studies, asking whether the respondent would advise a friend to pay the cost of a domestic workers' work permit. The rate of persons who said they would increased significantly, from 21 to 70 per cent in Malaysia, from 61 to 73 per cent in Singapore, and from 24 to 71 per cent in Thailand. Among Japanese respondents in 2019, 40 per cent said they would advise to do so (figure 27).

3.1.7 The entertainment and sex industry: Attitudes towards improved conditions and laws

Entertainment work, a women-dominant sector, is highly impacted by public attitudes and stereotypes. The entertainment sector, and the sex industry within it, largely remains outside of labour protections globally, and is criminalized and highly stigmatized (Empower Foundation, 2016). The UN Thailand Migration Report in 2019 devoted a chapter to research on the sex industry, finding that:

> Due to the criminalization of their work and the implementation of anti-trafficking interventions, migrant sex workers in Thailand face the regular threat of harassment and arrest, severely damaging their ability to earn a livelihood and support their families. Employment in the sex industry is not covered by Thailand's labour laws.
>
> Because sex work is often conflated with trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, police raids on workplaces to identify victims are a common occurrence. Migrant sex workers caught in such raids are typically either arrested and detained as criminals or taken to shelters as victims of trafficking, with their agency considered of little importance. In spite of this law enforcement approach, studies have found that the vast majority of people working in the Thai sex industry are employed there by choice, with the ability to earn a higher income a key motivating factor. Decriminalization and expanding recognition of sex work as a form of work is an essential first step to better protecting the labour rights of migrant workers employed within the sector (UN Working Group on Migration in Thailand, 2019).

It is important to note that while anti-trafficking interventions play a role in combatting human trafficking and protecting trafficking persons, not all migrant workers employed within the entertainment and sex industry are trafficked.

This survey asked the public about their support for increased realization of human and labour rights for workers in the sex industry. Support was highest in Japan and Thailand (52 per cent of the public), followed by Singapore (40 per cent), and Malaysia (22 per cent) (figure 26). The survey also asked specifically about public support for decriminalization of sex work, which is particularly relevant in Thailand where the Anti-Prostitution Law is currently undergoing review (as of October 2019). The UN Working Group on Migration in Thailand sees decriminalization of sex work is an essential first step, and in Thailand, 40 per cent of the public support decriminalization. Support for decriminalization was at 36 per cent in Singapore, 30 per cent in Japan, and 17 per cent in Malaysia. While the survey results among countries in this study are inconclusive, it is recommended in this report that labour protection mechanisms are developed to support increased realisation of human and labour rights in the entertainment sector and sex industry. In 2016, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

(CEDAW Committee) expressed concerns about the exploitation of sex workers in Thailand.[19] Their recommendation was to: "Review the Suppression and Prevention of Prostitution Act to decriminalize women in prostitution", which would allow sex workers and entertainment businesses to operate within the regulatory framework of Thailand's labour laws (CEDAW Committee, 2017, p. 7). By amending or repealing laws that directly and indirectly criminalize sex workers, labour protection mechanisms can be developed to eliminate recruitment and employment misconduct (UN Working Group on Migration in Thailand, 2019).

3.2 Influence of social norms

Social norms can be defined as the rules that describe what a certain group considers to be typical or desirable behaviour in a given situation (Tankard and Paluck, 2016, as cited in ILO, forthcoming b). Social norms work through the beliefs and perceptions of what is typical or desirable behaviour. They can signal membership in a group or identity and often affect how people interact with others, influencing behaviour through: imitation, the desire to comply with the majority or minority, identity, membership to a group, or social sanctions (ILO, forthcoming b).

Social norms are often found to shape attitudes towards marginalized groups, such as migrant workers, and have an impact on levels of inclusion or discrimination that citizens show them (Schlueter, Meuleman, and Davidov, 2013; Weldon, 2006). The implication of social norms, especially if they are strong, is that they may influence people to act against their conscience or what they believe to be right.

Psychological research has shown that changing knowledge and attitudes will not likely affect behaviours if social norms are not also shifted (Glasman and Albarracín, 2006; Webb and Sheeran, 2006). Therefore, perception that the behaviour is typical and normal tends to lead to a more lasting change in behaviour (ILO, forthcoming b).

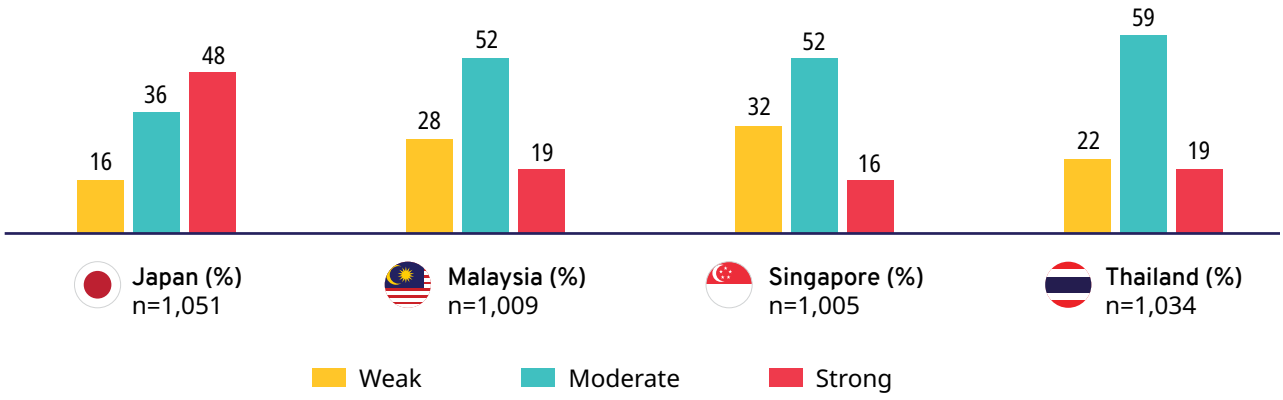
In this study social norms were measured by presenting survey respondents with a scenario in which someone they knew made a negative comment about migrant workers that they felt was offensive. In such a scenario, social norms can potentially suppress reactions from people if they feel it would be socially unacceptable to speak out, even if they feel offended. Two questions were asked to determine whether speaking out against offensive comments was considered socially acceptable and whether it was regarded normal behaviour. Based on these two questions, respondents could be classified into three groups:

19 "The Committee is concerned that a large number of women and girls are subjected to exploitation through prostitution in the State party and that women in prostitution are criminalized under the Suppression and Prevention of Prostitution Act of 1996, while those who exploit women in prostitution are rarely prosecuted. It also notes with concern that women working in the entertainment sector are presumed to be guilty of prostitution under the Act, arrested and subjected to humiliating treatment following violent police raids, and targeted in entrapment operations by police officers. The Committee is further concerned at reports of official complicity in the exploitation of women in prostitution, including large-scale extortion by corrupt police officers. It also notes that even women employed in legally operating enterprises in the entertainment sector do not benefit, in practice, from the protection of labour laws and social benefits available to other workers" (CEDAW Committee, 2017, p. 7).

1. those who felt it would be generally okay to speak out in most situations (lesser influence of social norms);
2. those who felt it would be okay to speak out in some situations but not others (some influence of social norms); and
3. those who felt it would not be okay to speak out (strong influence of social norms).

As shown in figure 15, respondents in Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand were relatively more likely to speak out against prejudice towards migrant workers. In Japan, however, this was less likely to happen, and nearly half the respondents (48 per cent) would not speak out. Given this, it is important to formulate any campaigns or behaviour change initiatives keeping in mind the effects that social norms have. Interventions that seek to change or harness social norms can change the psychological and social determinants of behaviour and create more lasting changes. The ILO has created practical guidance and tools for social norm interventions, particularly in relation to domestic work, which practitioners can draw on for further support (see ILO, forthcoming b).

Figure 15. Extent to which people are influenced by social norms: Would people speak out in situations of prejudice towards migrant workers?



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3.3 Interaction with migrant workers

3.3.1 Extent to which people encounter migrant workers

One of the most significant findings in the 2010 public attitudes survey was that interactions with migrant workers were crucial in shaping the level of support the public has for them. Consistent with this, Gallup's Migrant Acceptance Index has demonstrated that the public's acceptance rises with greater social interaction with migrants (Esipova, Publiese, and Ray, 2017). Further, citizens of countries with a high percentage of migrant workers are more likely to have a positive opinion about immigration and be more tolerant towards migrant workers, considering them as contributing to the local economy (Esipova et al., 2015). This 2019 study echoes these findings once again (see section 3.4).

> **"There is the need for greater interaction with migrant workers, and there should be a place where migrant workers can access and talk to locals when they have problems."** (NGO staff, Malaysia)

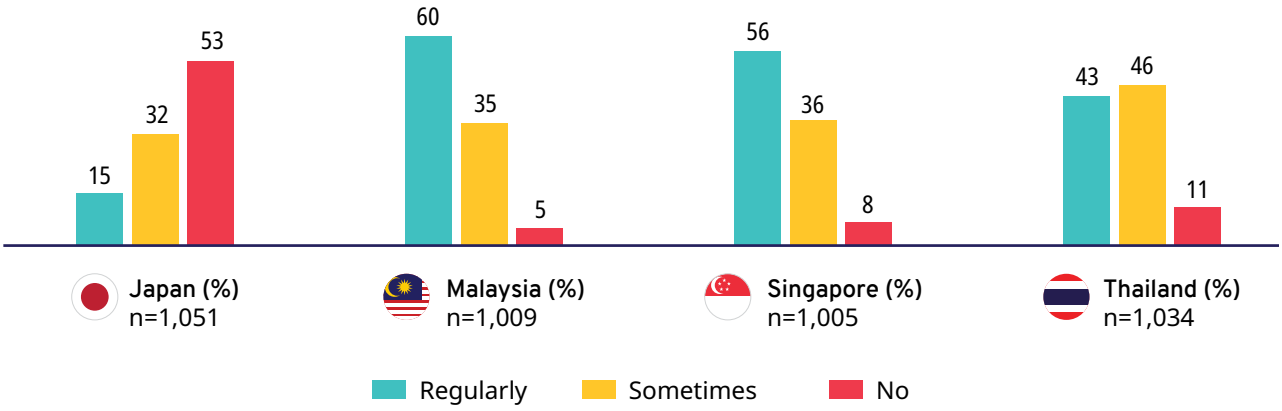
> **"Communicating and interacting across different cultures is really important to build tolerance and acceptance of diversity."** (Journalist, Japan)

According to Allport's 1954 contact theory, prejudices and stereotypes between majority and minority groups arise through the lack of direct interactions between them (Allport, 1954). Consequently, by communicating with others, people can recognize their diverse social characteristics, leading to a reduction in prejudice.

The survey findings revealed higher degrees of interaction with migrant workers in Malaysia and Singapore (figure 16). This is in line with the fact that these are multi-ethnic countries with a large proportion of migrant workers in their workforce.

Japan-based respondents reported the lowest level of encounters with migrant workers, with 53 per cent saying they had never encountered any migrant worker, and 32 per cent saying they had occasionally.

Figure 16. Frequency of interaction with migrant workers



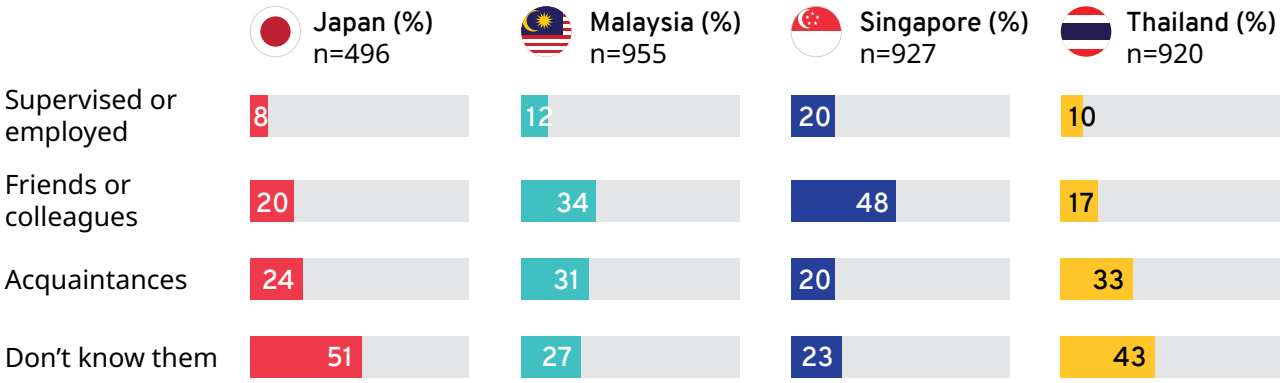
Overall, most encounters took place in the general community, but the Malaysian and Singaporean public also had work-related relationships, consistent with also having more interaction with migrant workers on average. Interactions when travelling were commonly reported in Malaysia and Thailand, at more than 50 per cent of respondents. In Japan, only 24 per cent of respondents met migrant workers during travel.

Respondents who had encounters with migrant workers were asked to describe the type of relationship they had had with them. Figure 17 classifies the types of relationships into four segments:

1. those who encountered migrant workers but don't know them at all;
2. those who do know them but don't know them that well;
3. those with friends and colleagues who are migrant workers; and
4. those who employ migrant workers or supervise them in the workplace.

Relationships were stronger in Malaysia and Singapore, and were to a much lesser extent in Thailand and Japan. Some 51 per cent of Japanese respondents said they had encountered migrant workers but did not know them at all. That means, nearly four in five people in Japan do not know any migrant worker personally.

Figure 17. Type of relationship with migrant workers

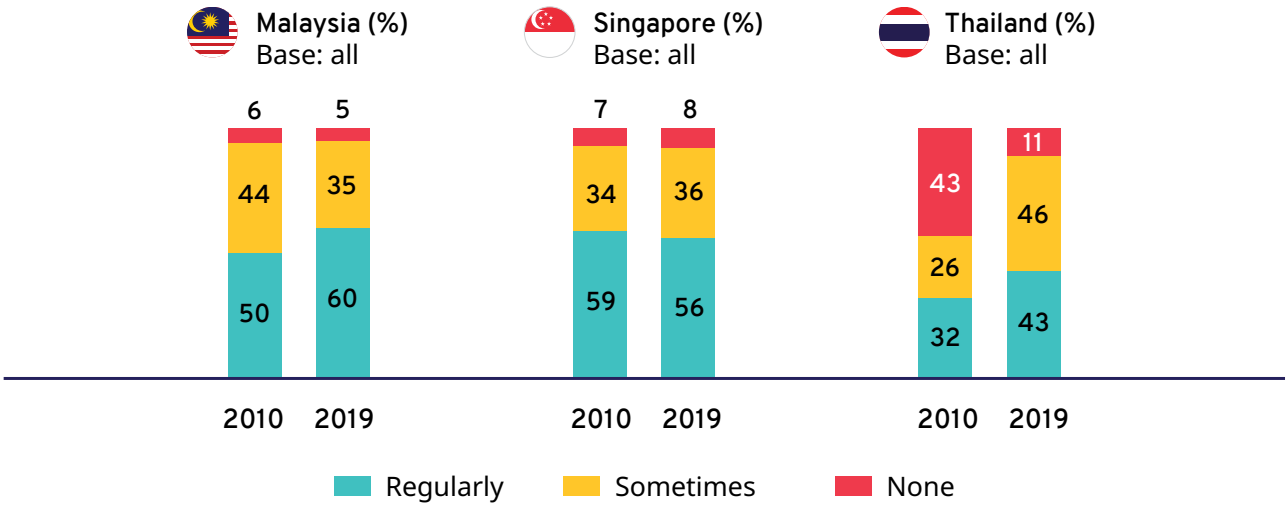


Base: have encountered migrant workers

3.3.2 Change in interaction with migrant workers since 2010

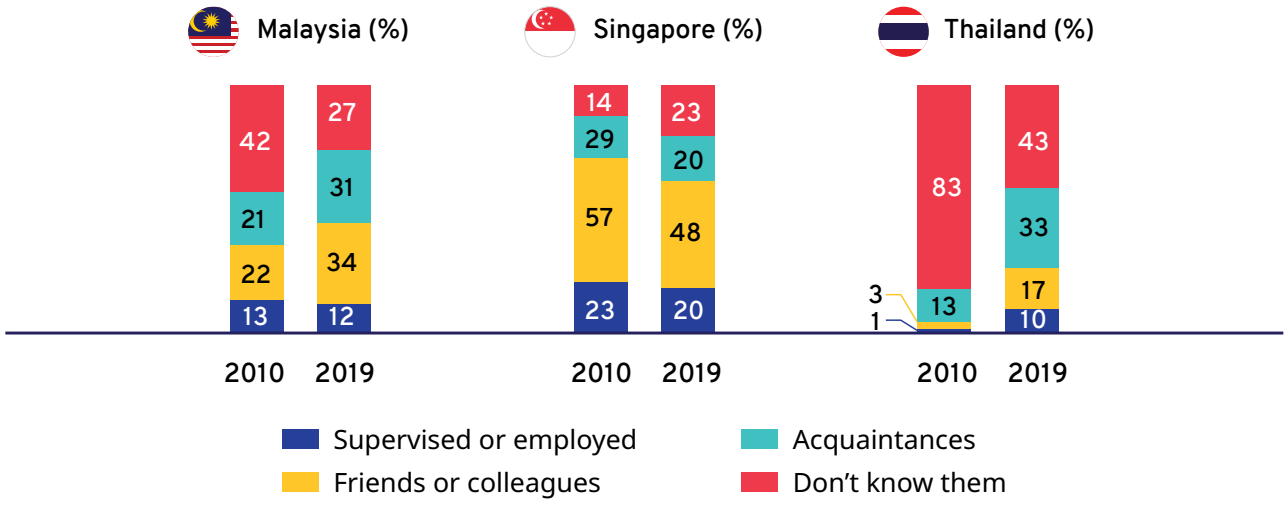
When surveyed respondents were asked if they interacted with migrant workers in their local community or at work, and whether this happened on a regular or occasional basis. Singapore, which had high levels of interaction in 2010, remained largely unchanged. In line with the trend of increasing levels of migration, interaction with migrant workers increased in Malaysia and Thailand (figure 18). The increase in Thailand was rather significant and was evident across regions as well as in both urban and rural areas. The region with the highest non-interaction with migrant workers was the North-East, at 16 per cent, and rural areas overall throughout Thailand had 16 per cent non-interaction, both considerably lower than the 43 per cent non-interaction recorded in 2010.

Figure 18. Frequency of interaction with migrant workers, by country, 2010 and 2019



As shown in figure 18, interaction with migrant workers was more pronounced in Malaysia and Thailand in 2019 than in 2010, but regular interactions declined slightly in Singapore. Many respondents in Singapore reported knowing migrant workers personally, and most were either friends or colleagues at work (48 per cent). In contrast, per figure 19, a much smaller proportion of respondents in Thailand reported knowing migrant workers personally and, in most cases, they were acquaintances (33 per cent). Again, the rather large shift in Thailand could partly be due to the change in methodology (see chapter 2), so the 2010 results should be considered with some level of caution. It is difficult to say why there was a slight decline in relationships in Singapore, but this decline may explain why general support for migrant workers also had a marginal decline since 2010. On the other hand, increasing interaction with migrant workers in Malaysia and Thailand has correspondingly not led to increasing levels of support for migrant workers (a higher KAP Index). See section 3.4.4 for additional analysis on this.

Figure 19. Type of relationship with migrant workers



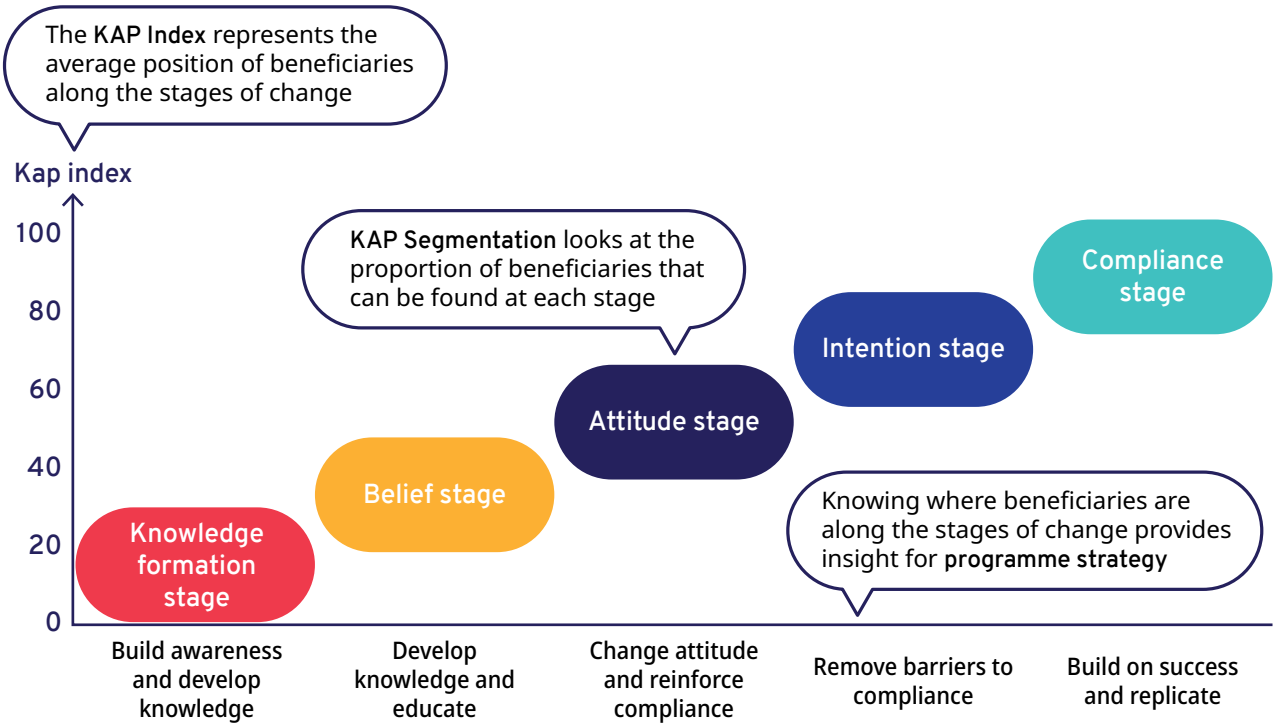
Base: have encountered migrant workers

3.4 Measuring support for migrant workers and modelling possibilities for shifts in behaviour using the KAP Score model

3.4.1 KAP Score model indicators

The KAP Score model uses several indicators to measure intervention outcomes and to make comparisons between different target groups and countries. The ones used for this study included the KAP Index and KAP Segmentation (figure 20). Dividing the journey towards compliance into stages of change also helps to better design interventions. If the target audience is trailing at the earlier stages, the focus should be on awareness and knowledge building. As the mindset of the targeted audience develops, influencing attitudes becomes more important. Finally, barriers should be removed and positive behaviours need to be reinforced.

Figure 20. KAP Score indicators



The indicators used can be summarized as follows:

- **KAP Index** is an indicator in which knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour measures have been aggregated at the individual level and indexed, expressed as a range from zero to 100.[20] The number represents the average position of beneficiaries along the stages of change, so that the higher the KAP Index, the more oriented the target group is towards robust public support for migrant workers. The KAP Index helps to make an

20 To make the KAP Index more sensitive to incremental changes, the total index range is from 0 to 200. Based on past studies, 95 per cent of all results have fallen within the range of 60 to 160, and the scale was therefore adjusted (with tails cut off before 60 and beyond 160) to show a zero to 100 range for more common understanding. The theoretical index can therefore be negative or exceed 100.

initial assessment against which outcomes can be monitored and evaluated and to compare outcome results across different target groups.

- **KAP Segmentation** looks at the proportion of beneficiaries who can be found at each stage of change and is used to understand how a target group is distributed across the different stages, from having no knowledge to displaying full "compliance" or positive behaviour to migrant workers. Using approximation (based on their level of knowledge, attitude, and behaviour), the target group is allocated to the different stages of change based on reaching certain thresholds across the KAP components.[21] An underlying principle is that full "compliance"/shifts in behaviour need to be underpinned by supportive knowledge and attitudes.

The KAP Score indicators are derived from 15 questions on knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to migrant workers. Table 8 shows the questions developed and used for this study.[22]

Table 8. KAP Score questions

KAP	Questions and statements
Knowledge	▪ Domestic workers do not have the same work benefits as other workers* ▪ There is a labour shortage for low-skilled workers doing routine manual work ▪ Migrant workers contribute positively to the national economy ▪ If the migration process is complex or expensive, more migrants will come irregularly ▪ The crime rate is not impacted negatively by migrant workers*
Attitude	▪ Migrant workers should not receive the same pay and benefits as local workers ▪ Our country does not need low-skilled migrant workers from other countries* ▪ Migrant workers are a drain on the national economy ▪ We should make it more difficult for migrants to come and work in this country ▪ Migrants commit a high number of the crimes in this country
Practice (compliance)	▪ Spoke out against someone saying offensive things about migrants* ▪ Helped a migrant integrate into their community or get ahead in their work ▪ Spoke to friends about some positive contribution migrant workers have made ▪ Encouraged someone who hires a domestic worker to pay for the work permit ▪ Report to the police or NGO when someone was found employing migrant child workers

Note: Attitudes are measured using a set of carefully constructed statements formulated in the third-person format, allowing respondents to answer more truthfully without attaching themselves to a particular attitude. They are also stated in the negative to force a more processed response. To be more relevant, four questions (*) were modified in the 2019 survey.

21 At the "knowledge formation" stage no threshold has been reached for any of the KAP elements. At the "belief" stage the threshold is reached for either attitude and practice but not knowledge. At the "attitude" stage the threshold must have been reached for two KAP elements. The same rule applies to the "intention" stage, but the threshold must have been reached for knowledge. At the "compliance" stage the threshold must have been reached for all KAP elements. The thresholds are based on set above average scores on each KAP element based on aggregated results from over 200 past samples. The thresholds are 80 per cent for knowledge, 48 per cent for attitude, and 66 per cent for practice.

22 It should be noted that four of the 15 KAP Score questions were updated to better reflect the current attitudinal climate on migration. While these changes were necessary, the differences found between 2010 and 2019 cannot be asserted with absolute certainty and should be interpreted with some caution.

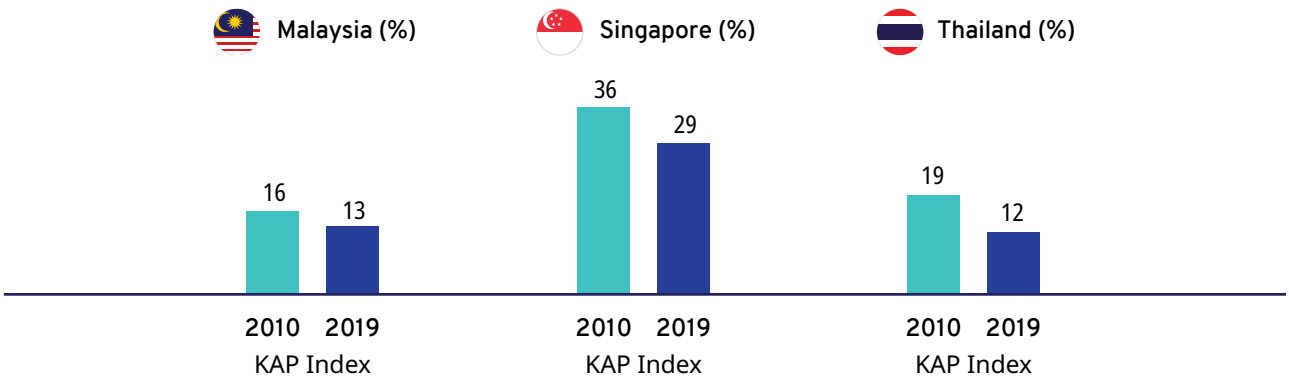
3.4.2 Change in overall support for migrant workers since 2010, per KAP Index

Because the Republic of Korea was included in 2010, but replaced with Japan in the current study, there is no longitudinal data for these countries. This section, therefore, covers comparison of results for Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand from 2010 and 2019.

The KAP Score model can be used to provide a proxy measure for the level of support people have towards migrant workers. The composite KAP Index can be used to compare overall support levels between sub-groups and to track results over time. As previously noted, the KAP Index is derived from 15 questions on knowledge, attitudes, and practices in relation to migrant workers (see table 8 above).

Figure 21 reflects a modest decline in the KAP Index in all three countries; meaning, support for migrant workers declined to some degree between 2010 and 2019. Both Singapore and Thailand had a seven-point drop in the index, whereas Malaysia had a more marginal decrease of three points. Despite the drop, Singapore's score is highest among countries surveyed, an indication that support for migrant workers remains relatively stronger in Singapore than in Malaysia and Thailand.

Figure 21. KAP Index, by country 2010 and 2019



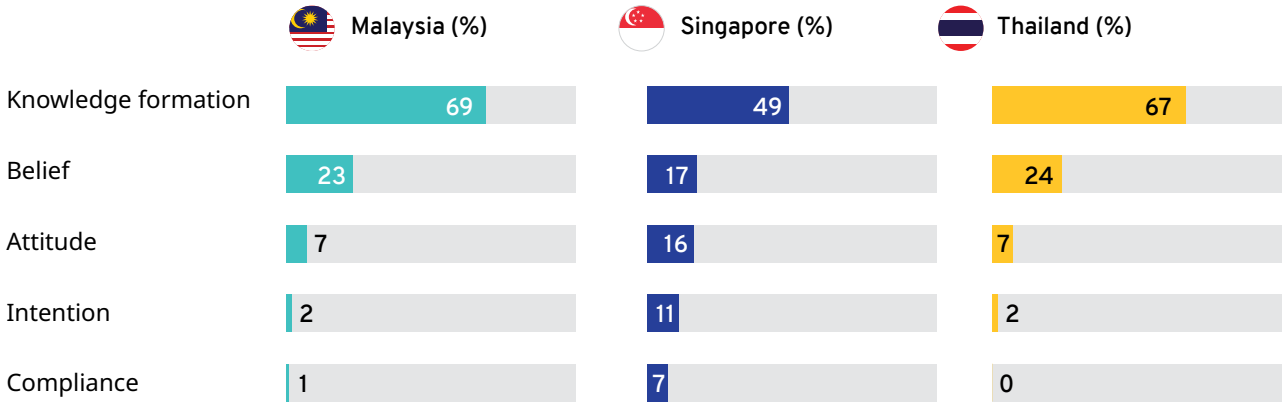
Base: all respondents

3.4.3 Survey data by KAP Segmentation: Knowledge, attitudes, practice

While the KAP Index depicts the average mindset of a population in the form of a one-number indicator, the KAP Segmentation (figure 22) quantifies the distribution of people along the five stages of change, sometimes referred to as the "behavioural compliance journey" (Lindgren and Kelley, 2019). Respondents found along the earlier stages of change are identified as having a mindset that is less supportive of migrant workers and, hence, would hold more negative attitudes and be more likely to discriminate against them. Those positioned at the more advanced stages are clearly more supportive of migrant workers, supported by their knowledge about them, their attitudes towards them, and their behavioural intentions.

Most respondents in Malaysia and Thailand were found to be at the knowledge formation stage, the earliest stage, and this segment was also the largest in all three countries. Respondents with more supportive mindsets towards migrant workers can be found in Singapore, where one in six people (18 per cent) are estimated to be in the later stages of the journey. This group understands why migrant workers come to their country and how they contribute in positive ways. But overall, the results indicate that most people in all three countries have limited knowledge about migrant workers, hold mostly negative attitudes towards them and are unwilling to engage in behaviour that would support them.

Figure 22. KAP Segmentation, by country, 2019



Base: all respondents

There has been a downward shift from advanced/later stages to earlier stages since 2010. Knowledge levels in all three countries reduced, particularly in terms of the need for migrant workers and that migrant workers contribute positively to the economy. Hence, more people than before are now found in the "knowledge formation" stage. This highlights the need for more basic education and awareness-raising activities to inform people about the positive contributions made by migrant workers. In a situation like this, public awareness-raising activities as well as positive policy change can have significant impact.

The overall decrease of the KAP Index should be interpreted in relation to global trends. The share of people who migrate to other countries around the world has increased in recent years. The estimated number of migrant workers in the world jumped from 155 million in 2000 to about 272 million in 2019 (IOM, 2017; UN DESA, Population Division, 2019). This sharp increase poses relevant but not insurmountable policy adjustments for destination countries related to the employment of migrant workers, access to education, and migrant workers' rights.

In order to discuss the KAP Score findings, and the placement of respondents from each country along the stages of change in the model, the subsections below list collated responses to the studies' questions on knowledge, attitudes, and practice. While the KAP Score indicators are based on the set 15 questions in these areas (see table 8), the below sections detail results from all questions asked on knowledge, attitudes, and practice.

3.4.3.1 Knowledge about migrant workers

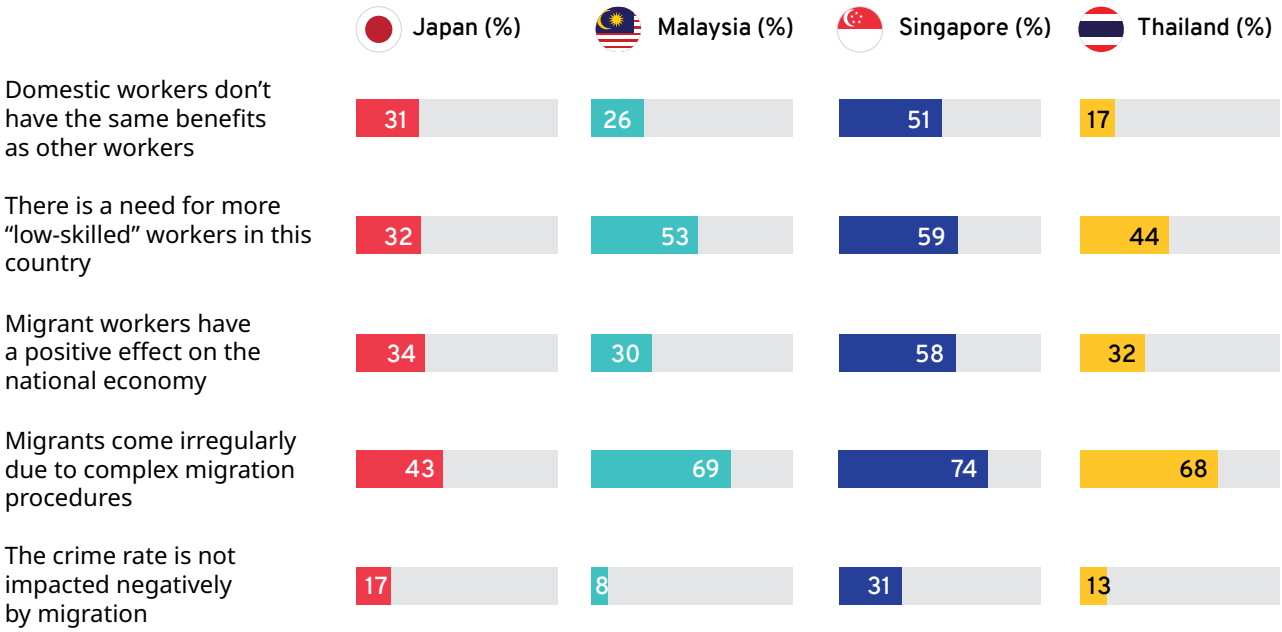
There are many misconceptions surrounding migrant workers. When present, these misconceptions contribute to the creation of an environment in which migrant workers are generally supported or discriminated against and shape national policies and legislation (Harkins and Ali, 2017).

Members of the public are often not informed about migrant workers' realities or their real impact on the economy, social benefits, and crime rates. Instead generalizations not grounded in facts tend to be prominent. Popular beliefs in the region include:

1. migrant workers receive more workplace benefits than they actually do;
2. migrant workers are not needed and take away jobs from nationals;
3. migrant workers have a negative impact on the national economy; and
4. migrant workers bring crime and cause harm.

The findings from this study indicate that knowledge levels about socio-economic migration trends and realities across the four countries are generally low (figure 23). Singapore stands out with higher knowledge levels among members of the public than in other countries. On the other end of the spectrum, knowledge levels in Japan were low across all questions asked.

Figure 23. Percentage of the public who indicated knowledge of these factual statements



Base: all respondents

Note: See section 3.1 for discussion of trends related to these statements in the region.

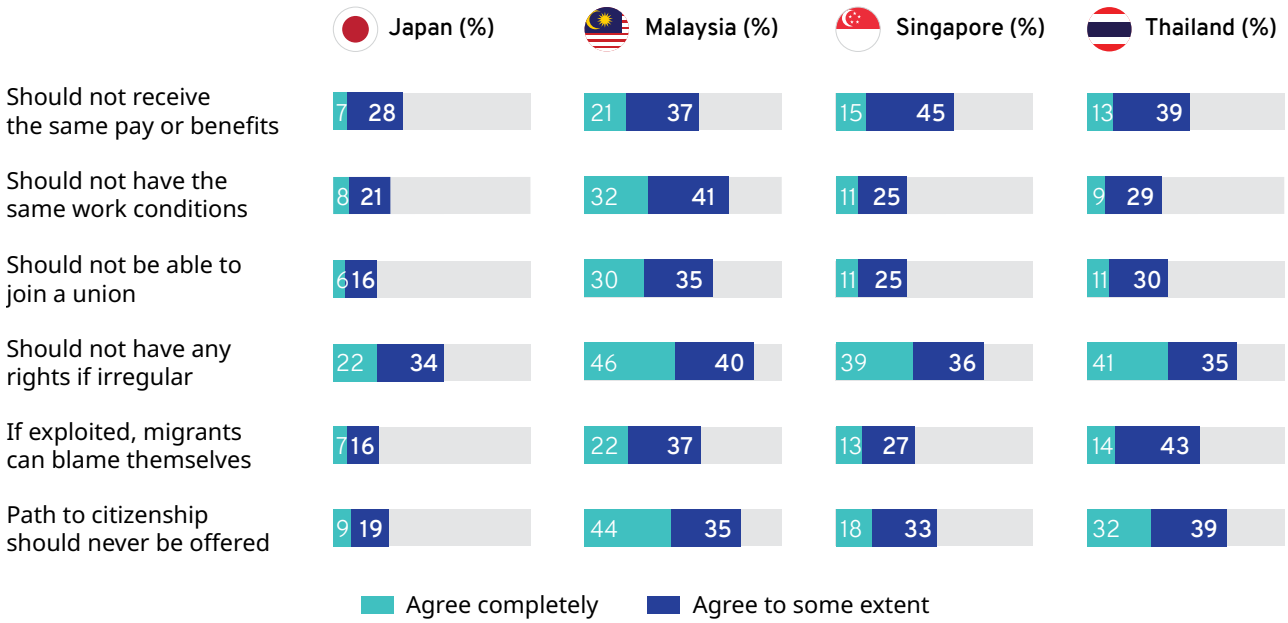
3.4.3.2 Attitudes towards migrant workers

A number of attitude statements were included in the survey, developed around typical opinions and perceptions that exist in connection with migrant workers.[23] The statements were grouped based on perceptions regarding "differential treatment" of migrant workers

23 Attitudes were measured on a balanced four-point agreement scale (1 – don't agree at all; 2 – don't really agree; 3 – agree to some extent; 4 – agree completely), with the option of a fifth "not sure" answer. See full survey formulation in Appendix I.

(figure 24) and the "perceived negative impact" they are seen to have on the host country (figure 25).

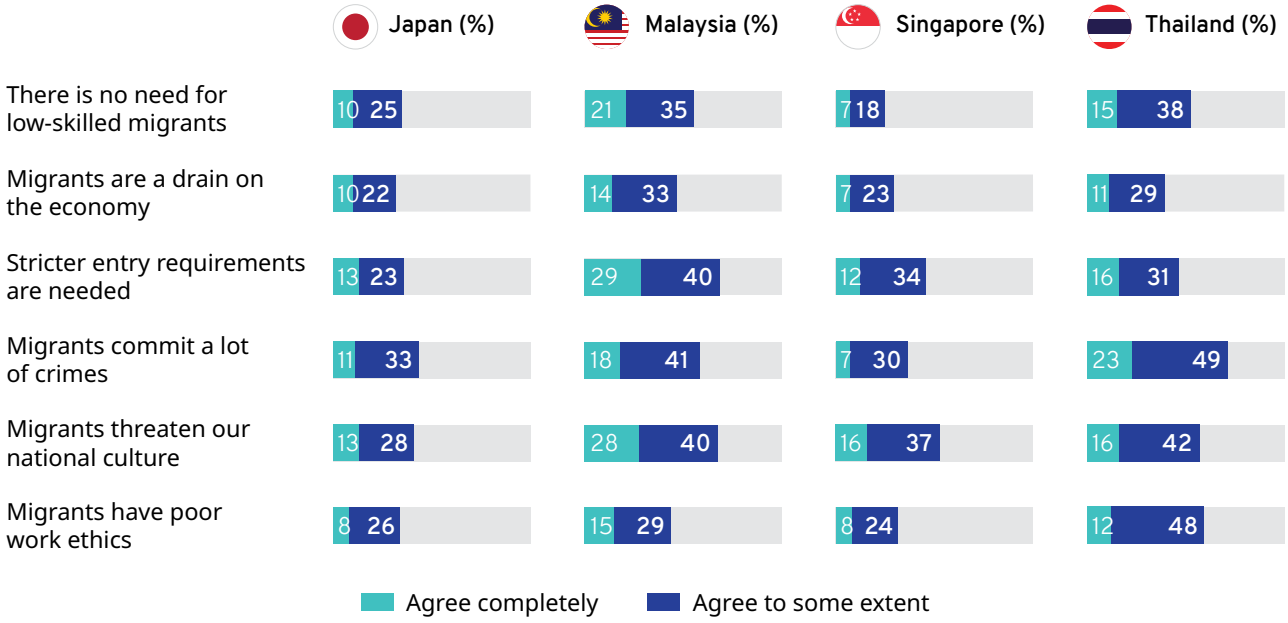
Figure 24. Level of agreement regarding differential treatment of migrant workers



Base: all respondents

Note: Respondents answered on a four-point agreement scale (1 – don't agree at all; 2 – don't really agree; 3 – agree to some extent; 4 – agree completely), with the option of "not sure" as a fifth answer.

Figure 25. Level of agreement regarding migrant workers having a negative impact



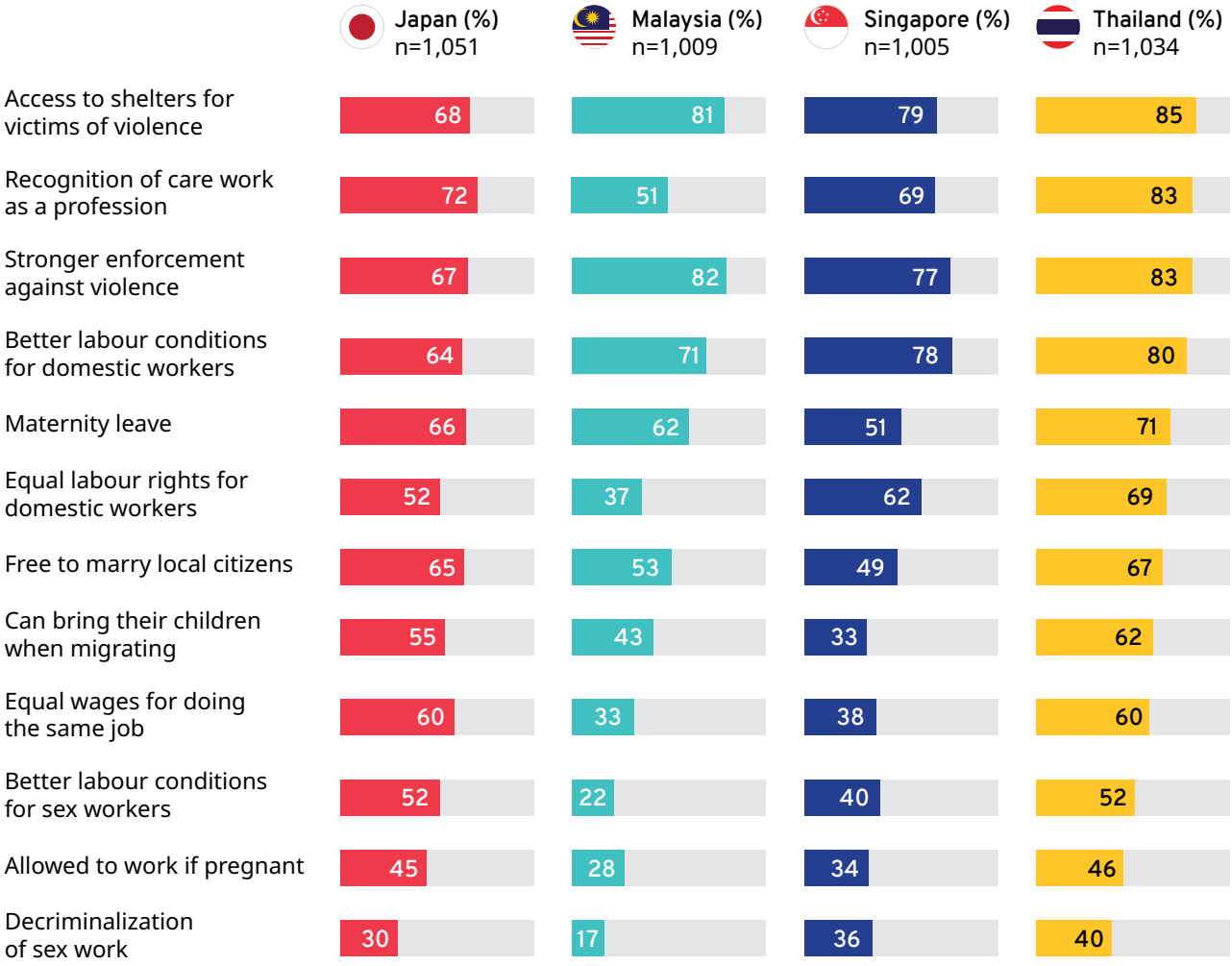
Base: all respondents

Note: Respondents answered on a four-point agreement scale (1 – don't agree at all; 2 – don't really agree; 3 – agree to some extent; 4 – agree completely), with the option of "not sure" as a fifth answer.

3.4.3.3 Attitudes towards women migrant workers specifically

In contrast to the many negative attitudes towards migrant workers in general that emerged through the survey, many respondents expressed positive support for potential policies that are specifically directed to support women migrant workers. Figure 26 reflects the different support areas for women migrant workers and some distinct differences between countries. Respondents in Thailand and Japan, for instance, expressed a range of support, with 60 per cent or more supporting most of the issues. Respondents in Malaysia and Singapore expressed slightly higher support for protective policies for migrant women (related to responses to violence, for instance) than for some other issues.

Figure 26. Support for women migrant workers

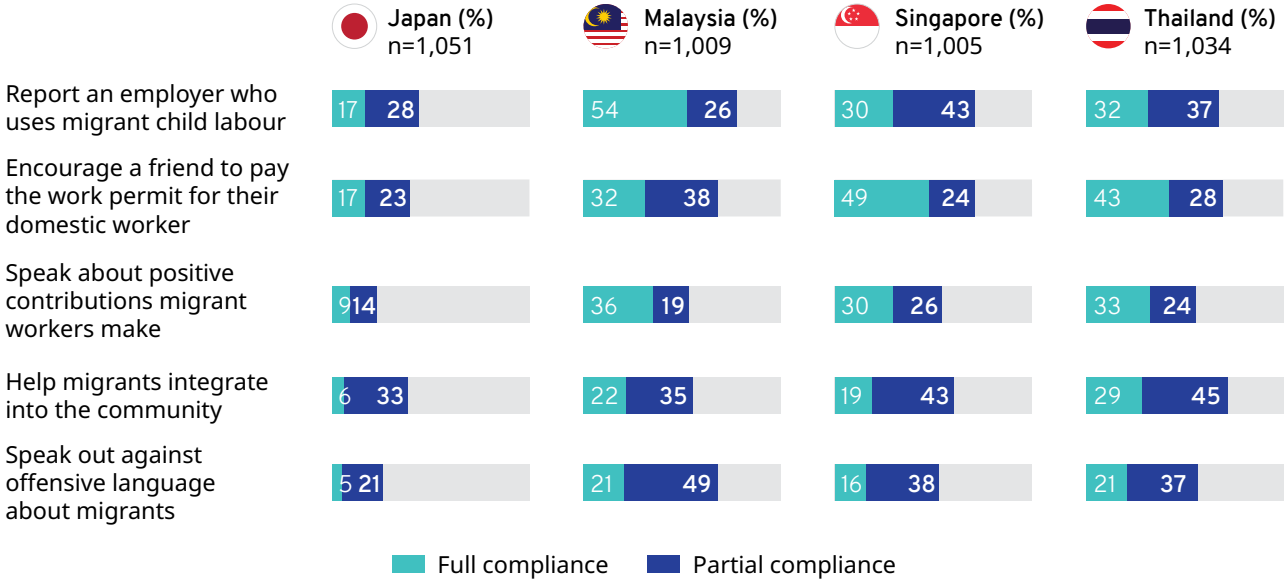


A comparison of the levels of support between men and women respondents revealed some meaningful differences. Overall, men were slightly more supportive of women migrant workers on some issues, especially when it comes to improved labour conditions for sex workers, decriminalization of sex work, and the ability of women migrant workers to marry citizens.

3.4.3.4 Practices, or behaviour, towards migrant workers

Positive behaviour, including intentions regarding such behaviour, was measured, and findings show significant gaps, particularly in Japan (see figure 27). Reporting an employer who uses migrant child labour or encouraging a friend to pay for their migrant domestic worker's work permit were found to have the highest levels of positive behaviour in all four countries, although at less than 50 per cent in Japan. Supportive behaviour, such as speaking about the positive contributions of migrant workers, helping them to integrate into a community, and speaking out against offensive language directed at migrants was generally low, with less than one third of all respondents saying they would definitely do so.

Figure 27. Supportive behaviour in relation to migrant workers



3.4.4 Interaction with migrant workers

As discussed in section 3.3.2, the study found increasing levels of interaction with migrant workers, while at the same time seeing a decline in support of them.

To understand this, the results were examined by looking at how the KAP Index has changed across the three levels of frequency of interaction (regular, occasional, and no interaction). As can be seen in figure 28, the KAP Index did not change significantly since 2010 among respondents with regular interaction with migrant workers. The notion that more extensive interaction with migrant workers leads to increased tolerance and support for them still holds true in 2019, even though the overall support for migrant workers (seen as the KAP Index in figure 28) has declined.

In all three countries, the decline was far greater among respondents with no interaction with migrant workers. This means there has been increased polarization in support between those who are interacting with migrant workers and those who are not. There was also a marginal decline among respondents who had had occasional interaction with migrant workers. Together, these declines explain why the support for migrant workers has diminished over time and prompts the question: What has been the driver behind this change? This question is discussed below (see subsection 3.4.4.2 below).

Figure 28. Change in KAP Index, by interaction with migrant workers, 2010 and 2019

Note: KAP Index is a proxy for public support for migrant workers.

3.4.4.1 Employment of domestic workers

As highlighted in previous sections, migrant domestic workers fall into a category of their own: treatment at work tends to be rather different due to many factors, including the lack of a legal framework to protect them. Hence, it is not surprising that the hiring of migrant domestic workers is not always synonymous with being more supportive of migrants.

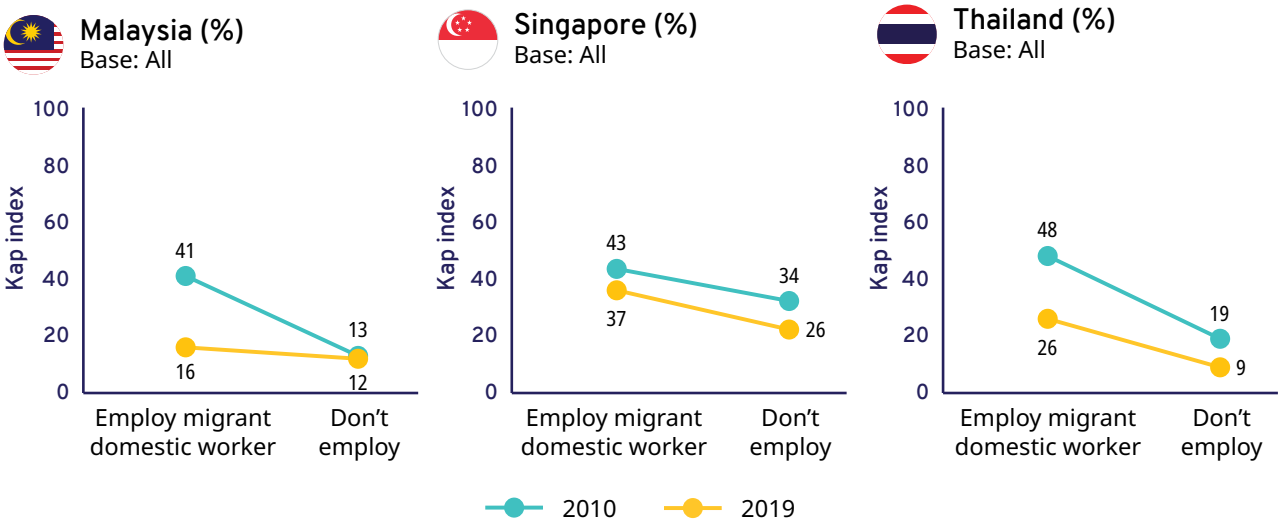
A strong, positive relationship was found in 2010, where respondents who had hired migrant domestic workers had a considerably higher KAP Index; meaning employers were generally more supportive of migrant workers than the general public were. In 2019, the results remained largely unchanged in Singapore, although the KAP Index overall declined somewhat (figure 29). Employers of migrant domestic workers in Malaysia and Thailand appeared significantly less supportive of migrant workers generally, declining by 25 points and 22 points, respectively.

However, it was not generally the case that employers of domestic workers had lower scores on the three questions related specifically to domestic work. Thus, while domestic worker employers had a comparatively low level of support for migrant workers in general, their support for migrant domestic workers does not appear to be lower than that of their non-employer counterparts.

Nonetheless, the lower KAP Score result among employers highlights a shift over the past decade, and governments and advocates should be mindful that migrant domestic workers could potentially be at higher risk of discrimination today.

Interestingly, further analysis found that 6 per cent of employers of migrant domestic workers in Japan, Malaysia, and Thailand claimed they had no interaction with migrant workers. This indicates the rather incredible disconnect that can exist between some employers and the migrant workers they hire to work in their homes.

Figure 29. Change in KAP Index, by employers of migrant domestic workers



3.4.4.2 Driver of support: More frequent and better quality interactions with migrant workers

To understand what drives support towards migrant workers, the study used the multi-variate analysing Chi-square Automatic Interaction Detector (CHAID)[24] to assess the effect of several socio-demographic and behavioural characteristics including:

- gender;
- age;
- area of residence (urban or rural);
- news media sources consumed;
- interaction with migrant workers;
- level of interaction with migrant workers; and
- employment of migrant domestic workers.

The analysis examined the extent to which all of these variables helped to generate significant changes in support for migrant workers, and the KAP Index was used as the independent variable for this purpose.

To increase the statistical power, the analysis was conducted on the total sample for Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand combined.[25] The results were also found to remain consistent at the individual country level.

Based on this analysis, frequency of interaction with migrant workers and type of interaction with migrant workers were the two variables that emerged as having the strongest influence on support for migrant workers. This shows that it is the experience people have with migrant workers that counts, rather than their demographic characteristics.[26] Because the CHAID analysis requires dichotomous variables, the variables were defined as follows:

a. **frequency of interaction with migrant workers** (regular versus occasional or no interaction); and
b. **type of interaction with migrant workers** (have friends or staff who are migrant workers versus don't know them well or don't know them at all).

The strongest result was represented by respondents with regular interaction with migrant workers and who also had friends or work colleagues who were migrant workers, employed migrant workers, or supervised staff who are migrant workers. This group represented 29 per cent of the overall population, and the KAP Index (support for migrant workers) for this group was 34, increased from the overall average of 19.

24 The decision tree analysis was done using the CHAID method, which is a technique created by Gordon V. Kass in 1980 and is used to discover the relationship between variables. A number of dichotomous variables from the study were included to build a decision tree, to help determine which variables best merge to explain the outcome in the given dependent variable (KAP Index).

25 Note that KAP Score analysis was not done on Japan, given that it was not included in the 2010 study. Total sample for CHAID analysis was therefore n=3,048.

26 The resulting significant level had a P-value = 0.000.

These results are important because they help to explain how support for migrant workers can develop and change over time, depending on different circumstances.

3.4.4.3 Demographics affecting attitudes?

Demographic variables were also explored, and while some differences emerged, they did not help to explain public support for migrant workers. Gender, age, and rural/urban location did not emerge as a major factors in the CHAID analysis. The demographic markers do not appear to be the most dominant factor contributing to what drove respondents to be more or less supportive of migrant workers.

Women were found to be generally less supportive of migrant workers, but they also were found to have less interaction with migrant workers. As per above section, interaction with migrant workers was shown to be a more consistent contributing factor to differences in KAP Index results.

3.5 Role of news and media

3.5.1 Mass and social media use

Media is an influential communication tool, able to both influence and reflect individuals' perceptions and behaviours. It is important not to simplify the relation between the media and public attitudes. Press coverage can reflect as much as shape attitudes. As noted in the ILO and UN Women study on media and attitudes towards domestic workers: "Media are competing in markets and using stories to sell newspapers [and advertising], rather than necessarily seeking to influence their readership (though government influence on the media should also be taken into account)" (ILO and UN Women, 2016).

Media can however have an impact on and reinforce people's beliefs, as well as act in the interest of policy-maker's priorities and agendas. Media often include anti-immigrant sentiments and gendered stereotypes, as opposed to featuring positive images of migrant workers, promoting gender equality principles, or pointing out the economic contributions that migrant workers make.

Media often do reinforce the view of migrant workers as criminals (Philo, Briant, and Donald, 2013). A 2013 study analysed media coverage of migration in a number of countries[27] and found that, among the countries with relatively lower scores in the Human Development Index, including Malaysia and Thailand, the reporting tends to be more negative towards migrant workers (Allen, Blinder, and McNeil, 2017; McAuliffe, Weeks, and Koser, 2015). Thai media refer to migrant workers mostly using deprecating language that focuses on their "illegal" presence, the threat they pose to job security, and the diseases they bring into the country (Harkins and Ali, 2017). This word choice and framing exacerbate a crisis mentality, whereby migrant workers are seen as threatening (Kosho, 2016). Some policy-makers take advantage of this climate to promote anti-immigration policies. Similarly, analysis of English-language

27 Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Thailand, the United Kingdom and Viet Nam.

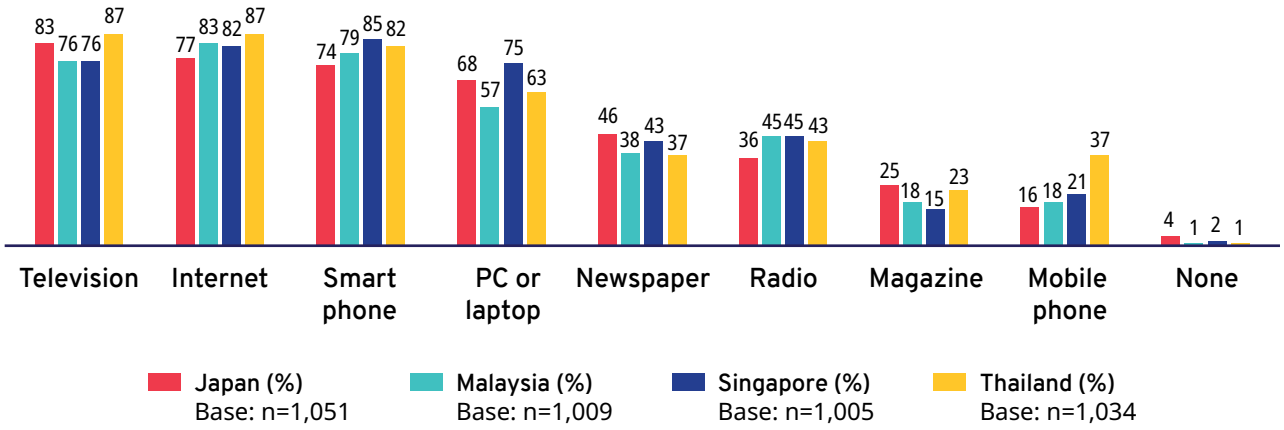
newspapers in Malaysia and Thailand found that "illegal" was the most common term used to describe migrant workers, and suggested that the negative images publicized by media contributed to a hostile and discriminatory environment (ILO and UN Women, 2016). In Asia, media in several countries are not independent. Stakeholders interviewed in one destination country noted that their national media are regulated, and the positive contribution of migrant workers or failings of migration policy do not get much coverage.

Media can also impact public opinion in a positive way by sharing accurate information about migrant workers in a country, by using non-discriminatory language, and by reporting positive stories that humanize migrant workers and promote understanding and social cohesion.

Based on evidence that media shape opinion about migration and drive behaviour, survey respondents were asked about the number and type of media sources they read. Figure 30 shows the overall penetration of media and mobile devices.

Despite using an online panel for this public attitude survey, Internet penetration was found to be reasonably close to actual Internet penetration for each country.[28] As shown in figure 30, Internet penetration and the use of smart phones are catching up with television in Japan and Thailand and have surpassed it in Malaysia and Singapore. Radio ownership, however, is at less than 50 per cent, and regular mobile phones (without Internet connection) are quickly becoming obsolete.

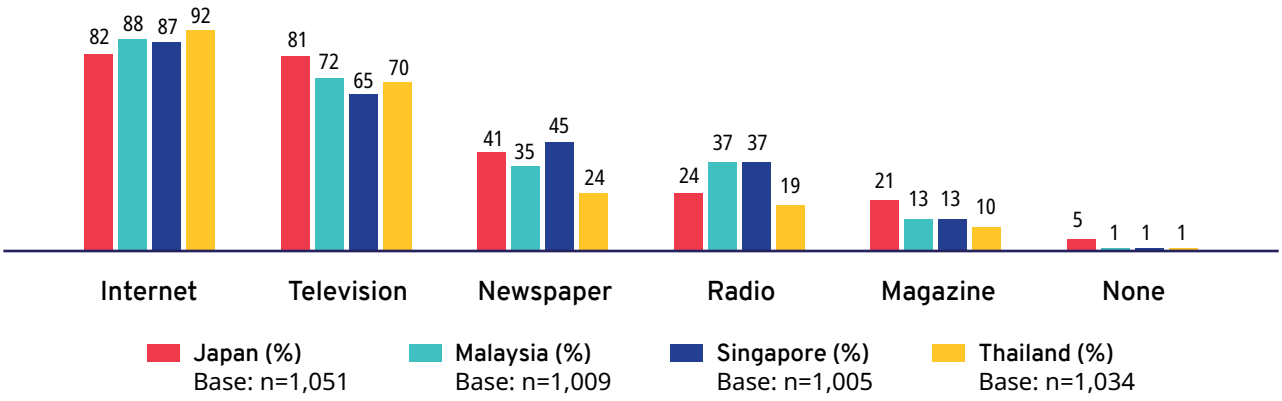
Figure 30. Media and device penetration



There is regular use of mass media in all four countries (figure 31). Internet was the most popular medium in the survey findings, with use ranging from 92 per cent in Thailand to 82 per cent in Japan. Television is popular in Japan (at 81 per cent), followed by Malaysia (72 per cent), Thailand (70 per cent), and Singapore (65 per cent). Newspapers were more common in the more developed nations of Singapore (45 per cent) and Japan (41 per cent), and less common in Malaysia (35 per cent) and Thailand (24 per cent). Radio users were approximately one third of the population in Malaysia and Singapore, but the percentage was significantly lower in Japan and Thailand.

28 According to Internet World Stat (2019), Internet penetration in the four countries are: Japan, 93.5 per cent; Malaysia, 77.3 per cent; Singapore, 82.5 per cent; and Thailand, 82.2 per cent.

Figure 31. Regular use of mass media

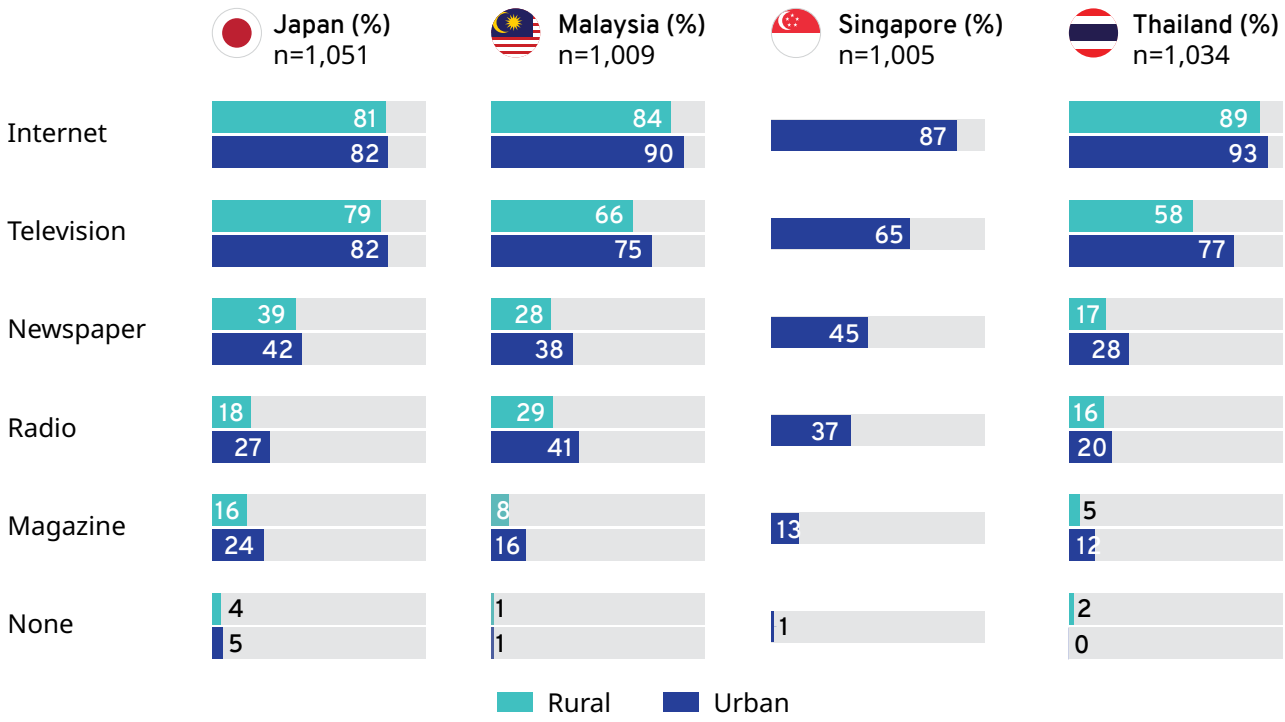


Facebook was the most popular social media platform in all countries except in Japan, where Line[29] is more dominant, at 65 per cent. YouTube is a consistent second, followed by Instagram and Google+. The number of social media platforms used was found to be larger in Thailand (at 4.4 on average) than in Malaysia, Singapore, and Japan, where the average was around three. With regards to chat channels, most people reported using between one and three services. With a large margin, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, and Line were the three most popular chat services, and this was true for both men and women.

As expected, media use was somewhat higher in urban areas than in rural ones (figure 32), with the difference being more pronounced in countries where the disparity in development between the two areas is greater, such as Malaysia and Thailand. Furthermore, the difference was more relevant for television than for the Internet. This could be explained by the high penetration of mobile devices, which provide Internet access as long as there is a mobile network available.

29 Line is a Japan-launched app for instant communications on smartphones, tablets, and personal computers.

Figure 32. Media use, by urban or rural area



Note: Because Singapore is a city-state, the findings are only for urban residents.

3.5.2 Sources of information about migrant workers

The ascent of the Internet and the subsequent use of digital media (such as Facebook, YouTube and blogs) should be framed in the context that total Internet penetration in Asia is 49 per cent (Internet World Stats, 2019). And, as has been argued, inequalities in access to and use of information technologies (particularly social media) might create a situation in which users are only exposed to news shared by like-minded peers (such is the case with Facebook and Twitter) (Allen, Blinder, and McNeil, 2017).

The 2010 ILO public attitudes survey revealed that the largest source for information about migrant workers was news media. In light of the increasing fragmentation of news media over time, respondents in the current survey were asked about a range of news mediums. This included both mainstream news channels, such as national newspapers, television, or radio news, and digital media, such as podcasts, Facebook, or blogs. Figure 33 summarizes the proportion of respondents who reported following digital news, mainstream news, both, or none. Consumption of digital news media has become as common as traditional mainstream media. This is consistent with the trend of people spending more time on the Internet than watching television. Surprisingly in Japan, as much as 23 per cent of the respondents said they do not follow any news, which was significantly more than in the other three countries. Japanese responses also showed less overlap between mainstream and digital news media, suggesting there is less breadth of news media consumption at the individual level.

Figure 33. Consumption of mainstream and alternative news media

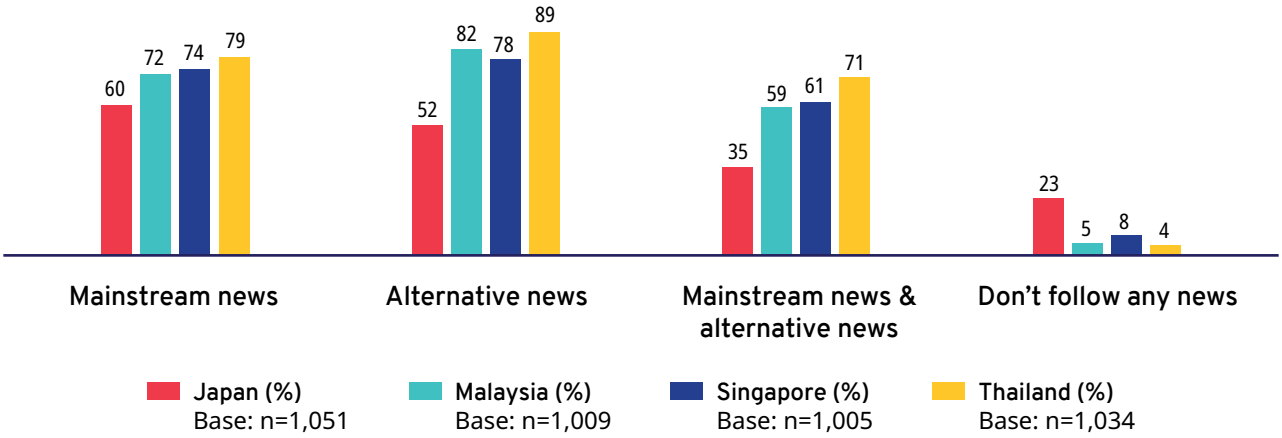
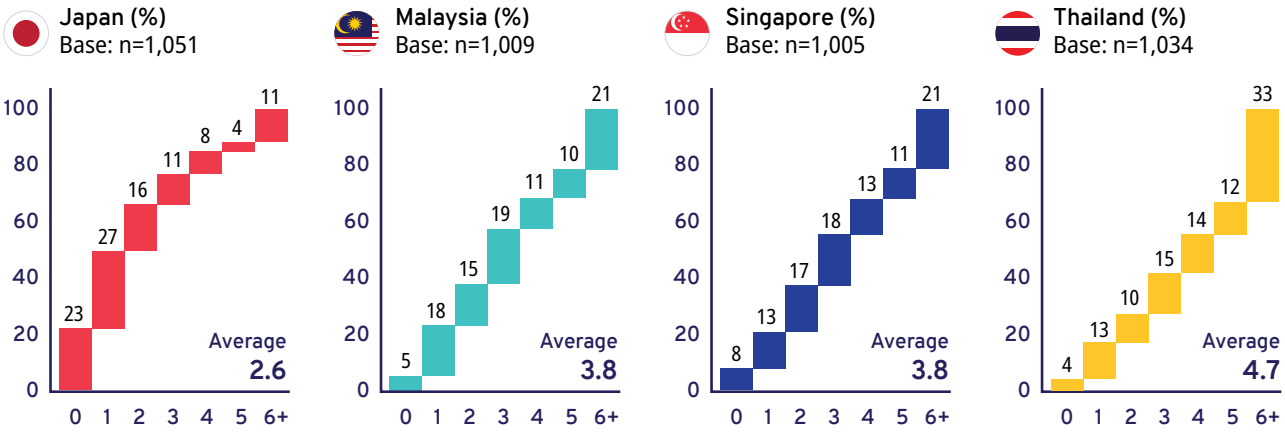


Figure 34 reflects the lower intake of different news media sources in Japan. Some 50 per cent of the Japanese respondents reported only following one news channel or no news channel at all, generating an overall average of 2.6 news media sources per person. The average was otherwise highest for Thailand, with slightly fewer than five sources per person, followed by Malaysia and Singapore, with around four each. The number of news media sources that respondents followed differed considerably between individuals, with some people following only a few sources or none and some following six or more.

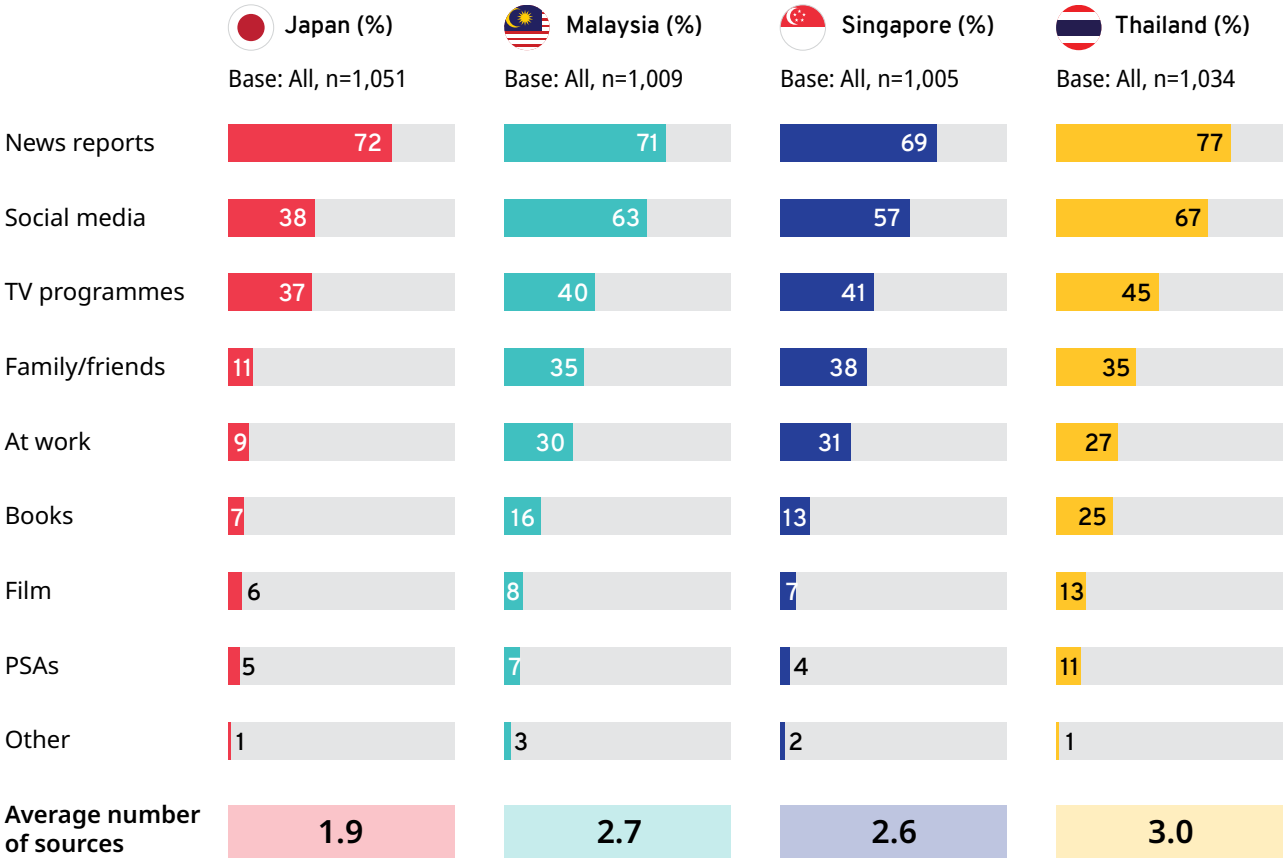
Figure 34. Number of news media sources consumed



The CHAID analysis described in section 3.4.4.2 found that after frequency and quality of interaction with migrant workers, the next variable tested to have a strong association with better migrant support was number of news media sources consumed. The more news media sources people consume, the more supportive they are of migrant workers (positive relationship with the KAP Index), irrespective of the type of media source.

Consistent with the 2010 ILO public attitudes survey findings, the current study confirmed that media, specifically news reports, social media, and television programmes, remain the most prominent source of information about migrant workers (figure 35). But social media has risen to a strong second place, surpassing television programming. The average number of information sources was found to be higher for Thailand, at three, followed by Malaysia (2.7), Singapore (2.6), and Japan (1.9).

Figure 35. Sources of information about migrant workers



Given the importance that media have in shaping opinion towards migrant workers, some interviewed stakeholders highlighted that news media can distort the contribution made by migrant workers rather than showing how they contribute to the economy.

> **"Government and media should promote the message that migrant workers are not destroying the economy but actually helping drive our economy."** (Government official, Thailand)

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4. Conclusions and recommendations

Results of the study show that support for migrant workers was quite low in all four countries. There is evidence that support had declined somewhat in Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand since 2010. The KAP Index helped determine that there had been a polarization in views; while people who had closer relationships with migrant workers remained relatively more supportive of them, those with limited or no interaction with migrant workers were less supportive than before. More frequent interaction with migrant workers, in combination with closer types of relationships with them (having friends or staff who are migrant workers), help to build stronger support.

Gender differences were examined as part of the analysis but appeared not to have a presence in terms of influencing support for migrant workers. Women respondents were, on average, relatively more negative towards migrant workers than men, but analysis showed this was due to men having more interaction with migrant workers, given interaction with migrant workers was correlative with positive attitudes. On the other hand, employers of migrant domestic workers were found to be less supportive of migrant workers overall, which represented a change since the 2010 survey.

There was generally positive support for policy initiatives aimed at supporting women migrant workers, related to responding to violence against women, as well as ensuring better labour protections for domestic workers.

In some areas, such as support for specific women-related policies, attitudes seem to be ahead of laws. In other areas, laws are ahead of public attitudes, for instance, laws related to non-discrimination. Thus, the below recommendations are a combination of suggestions for using the law and other measures to lead to better public attitudes towards migrants, and vice versa, for leveraging high public support in some areas to reform labour migration laws.

In light of these findings, the following recommendations are offered.

1. Promote inclusion, social interaction, and community engagement with migrant workers in destination countries, including through changes to policy and practice.

1.1 Stimulate attitude changes on specific issues to tackle discrimination and barriers that prevent the fair treatment of migrant workers and their social inclusion.

- Reform and align immigration and employment policies with other national regulations to ensure that migrant workers are able to fully access rights on par with nationals. These policies could reverse the negative trend of considering migrant workers as a temporary labour force.
- Adopt policies, regulations, and operating procedures that support social inclusion, including access to services, social security, schools, and health facilities.
- City planning can promote social inclusion by avoiding ghettoization of migrant workers' accommodation. Physical distance is a barrier that hinders migrant workers from integrating into the local community and encourages segregation and discrimination.
- Ensure that labour migration governance mechanisms are accessible, affordable, and not time consuming. Across all four countries, respondents said that migrant workers with regular status can adapt better than those without. Indeed, migrant workers with irregular status fear going out in public, as arrest, detention, and deportation are possible outcomes should they be too visible or encounter authorities.

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1.2 **Design, support, and deliver policies that facilitate platforms and community events where migrant workers and the public can meaningfully interact and demonstrate the positive impact of migrant workers on societies and economies.**

1.3 **Encourage inclusion in the workplace by working with employers and trade unions to promote the rights of migrant workers.** Trade unions could promote solidarity and encourage inclusion by accepting and supporting migrant workers to join as members where it is lawful for them to do so. Campaigns targeted towards migrant workers and trade union members should encourage migrant workers to join unions, where lawful, and to shape the attitudes of trade unions towards accepting and empowering all workers as part of the unions, regardless of their country of origin or migration status. Existing restrictions on migrant workers, or migrant-reliant sectors, to join unions should be removed.

1.4 **Avoid dehumanizing terms to refer to migrants and migrant workers in legal texts and other official documents.**

2. Conduct awareness-raising activities with the general public.

2.1 **Design campaigns to raise awareness by providing accurate and positive information about migrant workers and their contributions to national economy.** The study identified that the majority of the respondents had limited knowledge about the important contributions migrant workers make to destination countries. Information campaigns can help to inform the public ideally by working on shifting social norms and shared values. It is important to focus on specific sectors and problems so that the public can relate to the messages in a more personalized way.

- Promote campaigns that address the root of negative attitudes towards migrant workers. Strive to develop a personal connection between the public and migrant workers by focusing on specific migrant work sectors and also on interactions among nationals and migrant workers within that sector.
- Promote evidence of the beneficial impacts of migrant workers to strengthen positive attitudes while at the same time debunking common myths, such as the characterization of migrant workers as criminals, as taking jobs from nationals, or as having a negative impact on the economy.
- Tackle stigma and raise the status of roles and work sectors in which migrant workers work. Undervaluing the work of migrants has negative consequences and can lead to discrimination and social exclusion. Promoting the importance of decent work, equal opportunities, social protection, gender equality, and inclusion are essential.
- Take care to ensure that messaging does not promote migrant workers – especially women migrant workers – as "victims" or inherently vulnerable. This can feed into narratives that migrant workers are weaker and powerless, and through emphasizing difference, can undermine migrant workers' claims to the same rights at work as nationals.

- When promoting changes in practice and behaviour, give practical tips and guides for action, rooted in laws and other normative guidance.
- Communicate messages through mass media as well as social media platforms, including Facebook, Line, YouTube, and Instagram, to maximize reach. Tackle "fake news", racial discrimination, and hate speech online, and ensure that civil society online activism is encouraged and supported.

2.2 **Complement and reinforce public campaigns with targeted interventions directed at influencer groups.**

- Encourage governments, in partnership with international organizations and other relevant actors, to encourage schools to promote positive behaviour towards migrant workers and members of their families. The study highlighted a general lack of knowledge about migrant workers' rights. But public education on prejudice and diversity can shape attitudes towards migrant workers as well as change discriminatory social norms and stereotypical behaviours.
- Implement interventions to encourage more balanced and inclusive reporting, and to encourage the news media to use non-discriminatory terminology when reporting stories about migrant workers. News media are influential and impact the public's attitudes as well as policy-makers' agendas. Terms such as "undocumented" and "irregular" can be used rather than "illegal"; and "migrant" can be used rather than "alien". At all opportunities, humanize the individual representation of migrant workers and avoid descriptions that overemphasize the number of migrant workers or depict the migrant population as degrading the dominant culture.

2.3 **Continue to track shifts and trends in public support for migrant workers in countries of destination.** Doing so will allow ongoing campaigns and other interventions to adjust to any changes in public attitudes. More frequent tracking of attitudes can also enable studies to identify causation of changes in public support for migrant workers.

3. Harness the opportunities available given the high degree of public support for women migrant workers, including opportunities to address violence against women.

3.1 **Leverage the positive public support for ending violence against women migrant workers. Respondents showed high levels of support for access to shelters for women who experience violence and for stronger enforcement against violence.**

- It is recommended to work with governments, trade unions, and NGOs to ensure the availability of shelters and comprehensive services designed to meet the needs of women migrant worker survivors of violence.

- To ensure stronger enforcement against violence, it is recommended that governments work to align laws and policies with, and ratify, the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190).
- Governments, employers, trade unions, and NGOs should run campaigns to end violence and harassment in the world of work, including against migrant women and other marginalized groups. Awareness-raising and campaigning should form an important part of combined strategies linked to prevention of violence and harassment in the world of work.

3.2 **Leverage the public support for women migrant workers to receive maternity leave.** Policy change and/or enforcement is needed in migrant countries of destination to ensure women migrant workers have de jure and de facto access to maternity leave within broader social security schemes, and that women migrant workers are not discriminated against – either at work or during recruitment – on the grounds of pregnancy.

3.3 **Support increased realization of human and labour rights in the entertainment sector and the sex industry.** Labour protection mechanisms are needed to eliminate recruitment and employment misconduct and to prevent violence and exploitation for all migrant women (UN Working Group on Migration in Thailand, 2019).

3.4 **Support governments and employers to actively promote gender-sensitive policies and practices that tackle gender stereotypes and occupational segregation.** Strong gender segregation of occupation in the region is the result of stereotypical perceptions of what women can or cannot do, as well as the consequence of gender-differentiated barriers in access to specific job opportunities.

4. Address the declining attitudes of employers of domestic workers.

4.1 **Governments, trade unions, and other stakeholders, including domestic workers groups, should conduct a coordinated and evidence-based publicity campaign on the social and economic value of domestic work, and on the rights of domestic workers.** Domestic work is often undervalued, and often not fully considered as work, either by employers or through full inclusion in national labour laws.

4.2 **All stakeholders, including and especially the media, should use respectful terms to describe domestic workers.** They should avoid terms such as "servant", "maid", and "helper", and instead use "domestic worker", which squarely shows that domestic workers are workers, and not servile or part of the family.

4.3 **Leverage the positive public support for domestic workers to design and enforce regulations aimed at improving the working conditions of women migrant workers, as well as ratification of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).** Respondents showed high levels of support for recognition of care workers, improvement of the working conditions of domestic workers, and equal labour rights

for domestic workers on par with nationals. Currently, none of the four countries in this study has ratified Convention No. 189.[30] Doing so would go far toward improving working conditions for domestic workers, as it allows for weekly rest for at least 24 consecutive hours, a limit on payment in kind, clear information on the terms and conditions of employment, as well as freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.

4.4 **Conduct further research to understand the knowledge, attitudes, and practices (work entitlements provided) of employers of migrant domestic workers.** Such a study is critical in light of the fact that employers today appear to show less support for migrant workers than before.

30 See ILO Normlex: Information System on International Labour Standards, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:1:0::NO::: [accessed 13 Mar. 2019].

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Appendix I. Survey questionnaire

Email introduction for panel members

Migration has become a hot topic in recent time, and your country hosts some migrant workers from overseas. In connection to this we are doing a survey amongst the general population and your opinion is very important to us. The survey will take around 15 minutes to complete. Your answers are of course kept strictly confidential. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Quota

Sex	All	Location	Thailand	Malaysia	Singapore	Japan
Male	n=500	Urban	n=700	n=700	n=1000	n=700
Female	n=500	Rural or small town	n=300	n=300		n=300

S1 Record country

☐ Thailand ☐ Malaysia ☐ Singapore ☐ Japan

S2 What region do you live in? (Select one)

Thailand

☐ Greater Bangkok
☐ Central
☐ East
☐ West
☐ North
☐ North-East
☐ South

Malaysia

☐ Central
☐ North
☐ East coast
☐ South
☐ Sabah
☐ Sarawak
☐ Territory

Japan

☐ Hokkaido
☐ Tohoku
☐ Kanto
☐ Chubu
☐ Kansai
☐ Chugoku
☐ Shikoku
☐ Kyushu
☐ Okinawa

Singapore

☐ Central
☐ East
☐ North
☐ North-East
☐ West
☐
☐

S3 Which of the following describes the community in which you live?

☐ Metropolitan area, urban centre or larger town
☐ Rural area or small town

S4 You are…

☐ Male ☐ Female

S5 Which of the following age groups do you fall into? (Select one)

- ☐ Younger than 18 years **STOP**
- ☐ 18–24
- ☐ 25–29
- ☐ 30–34
- ☐ 35–39
- ☐ 40–44
- ☐ 45–54
- ☐ 55 or older

Q1 Migrant workers are people from overseas who come to this country for the main purpose of taking up work. What is your main source of information about migrant workers? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ News and media reports
- ☐ TV documentary or other TV programmes
- ☐ Internet and social media
- ☐ Through my work or colleagues
- ☐ Through family and friends
- ☐ Film
- ☐ Books
- ☐ Public service announcements
- ☐ Other (SPECIFY)
- ☐ None

Q2 Have you ever encountered migrant workers either in your local community or at your place of work? (Select one)

- ☐ Yes regularly
- ☐ Yes sometimes
- ☐ No **GO TO K1a**
- ☐ Not sure **GO TO K1a**

Q3 Where have you encountered migrant workers? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ At home
- ☐ At work
- ☐ In our local community
- ☐ When I travel
- ☐ Other place

Q4 Do you know any migrant workers personally? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Yes I have supervised or employed migrant workers
- ☐ Yes I have friends or colleagues who are migrant workers
- ☐ Yes but I don't know them well
- ☐ No

Knowledge

K1a Do domestic workers, maids,[31] in the country have the same work benefits as other workers? (Select one)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Domestic workers are not workers
- ☐ No, domestic workers don't have the same work benefits
- ☐ Not sure

K1b Does this country have a need for more workers? (Select one)

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes, but mainly for high skilled jobs like doctors and lawyers
- ☐ Yes, but mainly for low skilled workers doing routine manual work
- ☐ Not sure

K1c What effect do migrant workers have on the national economy in this country? (Select one)

- ☐ An overall positive net effect
- ☐ An overall negative net effect
- ☐ No impact at all
- ☐ Not sure

K1d Why do some migrants come into this country illegally? (Select one)

- ☐ They are too lazy to get the right paper work
- ☐ Because of complex or expensive migration procedures
- ☐ They don't care if they break the law
- ☐ Not sure

K1e How has migration affected the crime rate in this country? (Select one)

- ☐ Migrants have caused the crime rate to go up significantly
- ☐ Migrants have caused the crime rate to go up slightly
- ☐ The crime rate is not impacted negatively by migration
- ☐ Not sure

K1f What do you think is the most common behaviour of migrant workers who have suffered abuse ~~or violence?~~ (Select one)

31 Note that this term was used in the survey to ensure understanding of concept among the public surveyed. It is not condoned by the ILO or UN Women, which singularly use the term 'domestic worker'.

- ☐ They quietly accept it
- ☐ They seek help from the police, government, or their embassy
- ☐ They seek help from non-government organizations or fellow migrant workers
- ☐ They often don't report it because they are afraid
- ☐ Not sure

Attitude

K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Select one answer per row)

	Don't agree at all	Don't really agree	Agree to some extent	Agree completely	Not sure
A Migrant workers should not receive the same pay and benefits as local workers					
B Our country does not need low skill migrant workers from other countries					
C Migrant workers are a drain on the national economy					
D We should make it more difficult for migrants to come and work in this country					
E Migrants commit a high number of the crimes in this country					
F Migrant workers should not receive the same work conditions as local workers					
G Migrant workers should not be able to join a union					
H The influx of migrant workers threatens our country's culture and heritage					
I Migrants with illegal status who have broken the law should not expect to have any rights at work					
J Migrant workers who end up being exploited only have themselves to blame					
K Migrant workers should not be offered a path to citizenship under any circumstances					
L Migrant workers have poor work ethics, you cannot trust them					

K3 There are currently discussions around various issues that affect women migrant workers. Which of the following would you support or not support? (Select one answer per row)

	Support	Not support	No opinion
A Migrant women having access to shelters if they experience violence			
B Pregnant migrant workers being allowed to work			
C Providing the same labour rights to migrant domestic workers as other workers			
D Offering maternity leave to migrant women			
E Women migrant workers being allowed to bring their children with them when migrating			
F Equal wages for local and migrant women who are doing the same job			
G Stronger law enforcement to reduce violence against migrant women			
H Improved labour conditions for domestic migrant workers			
I Improved labour conditions for sex workers			
J Decriminalization of sex work			
K Migrant women can marry local citizens if they want to			
L Recognition of care work as a formal profession			

Practice

K4a Have you ever spoken out against someone who was saying offensive things about migrants in this country? (Select one)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No, but if someone did, I would speak out
- ☐ No, and it's unlikely
- ☐ Not sure

K4b Have you ever helped a migrant integrate into your community or get ahead in their work? (Select one)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No, but if I had an opportunity I would
- ☐ No, and it's unlikely
- ☐ Not sure

K4c In the past 12 months, have you ever spoken to friends or colleagues about some positive contribution migrant workers make to our country (Select one)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No but I think I will at some point
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't remember

K4d Your friend is thinking of employing a migrant domestic worker to help out in their household and asks for your advice about the cost for work permit, which of the following would you recommend? (Select one)

- ☐ To pay for the work permit
- ☐ Deduct PART of the work permit fee from the domestic worker's salary
- ☐ Deduct ALL of the work permit fee from the domestic worker's salary
- ☐ Don't know

K4e You noticed an employer in your community who is employing migrant child workers, what would you do? (Select one)

- ☐ Report it to the police or an NGO and follow up to make sure they did something about it
- ☐ Just report it to the authorities
- ☐ Probably do nothing
- ☐ Not sure what I would do

K5 Some people would suggest that some migrant workers adapt to living in your country better than others. What would you say is the general perception about migrant workers from the following groups in terms of how well they adapt and blend in? (Select one answer per row)

Migrant category	Don't adapt	Adapt to some extent	Adapt very well	Not sure
A Men migrant workers				
B Women migrant workers				
C Migrant workers with legal status				
D Migrant workers without current legal status				
E Younger migrant workers				
F Older migrant workers				
G Migrant workers from South East Asia				
I Migrant workers from South Asia				

K6 If someone made an offensive comment about migrant workers, and it made you feel very uncomfortable, would it be acceptable to openly disagree with the person? (Select one)

- ☐ Yes, most of the time
- ☐ Sometimes yes, sometimes not
- ☐ Most of the time no

K7 If someone made an offensive comment about migrant workers, which of the following is considered normal behaviour if you felt very uncomfortable hearing the comment? (Select one)

- ☐ Tell them you disagree
- ☐ I may disagree but depends on the situation
- ☐ Better to keep quiet

Media

M1 Which of the following media and devices do you own or subscribe to? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Television
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Newspaper
- ☐ Magazine
- ☐ Internet
- ☐ PC or laptop
- ☐ Smart phone or tablet
- ☐ Regular mobile phone
- ☐ None of the above

M2 Which of the following media do you regularly watch, listen to or read? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Television
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Newspaper
- ☐ Magazine
- ☐ Internet
- ☐ None of the above

M3 For news, what media do you follow or subscribe to on a regular basis? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Don't follow news regularly
- ☐ International newspapers (print / online)
- ☐ National newspapers (print / online
- ☐ News magazine subscription (print / online)
- ☐ Mainstream television news
- ☐ Cable news
- ☐ Online TV subscriptions
- ☐ Mainstream radio
- ☐ Radio talk shows
- ☐ Podcasts
- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ Other social media sites
- ☐ Mobile news Apps / Chatbot
- ☐ Free streaming from various websites
- ☐ Blogs and e-forums
- ☐ Other (SPECIFY)

M4 Which of the following social media sites do you subscribe to, if any? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Google+
- ☐ Instagram (IG)
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ Mixi
- ☐ Line
- ☐ Gree
- ☐ Mobage
- ☐ Other
- ☐ None **GO TO M6**

M5 Which of the following activities do you do regularly on your social media sites? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Searching
- ☐ Reading
- ☐ Chatting
- ☐ Connecting and networking
- ☐ Downloading
- ☐ Liking, sharing and commenting
- ☐ Competition and games
- ☐ Watching videos
- ☐ Other

M6 Which of the following chat services do you use, if any? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Google (Hang Out)
- ☐ Facebook (Messenger)
- ☐ WhatsApp
- ☐ Line
- ☐ Skype
- ☐ Yahoo
- ☐ Viber
- ☐ WeChat
- ☐ BlackBerry Messenger (BBM)
- ☐ Other
- ☐ None

Demographics

D1 Which of the following best describes your current level of education? (Select one)

- ☐ Completed elementary school or less
- ☐ Completed junior high school
- ☐ Completed senior high school
- ☐ Completed vocational education
- ☐ Diploma, university or higher education

D2 What is your main activity at present time? (Select one)

- ☐ Employed full time or part time
- ☐ Self-employed, seasonal or piecemeal work
- ☐ Unemployed, looking for work **GO TO D6**
- ☐ Home duties **GO TO D6**
- ☐ Studying **GO TO D6**
- ☐ Other **GO TO D6**

D3 In which of the following sectors do you work? (Select one)

- ☐ Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- ☐ Mining
- ☐ Manufacturing
- ☐ Electricity, gas and water supply
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Retail and wholesale
- ☐ Transportation and storage
- ☐ Finance, real estate, and business services
- ☐ Community, social, personal services, food services
- ☐ Government
- ☐ Communication/mass media
- ☐ Others

D4 Which of the following best describes your current position? (Select one)

- ☐ Management level
- ☐ Supervisor with subordinates
- ☐ Office worker
- ☐ Manual labour
- ☐ Self employed

D5 Are you in a position where you directly employ people or make decisions regarding employment of people?

☐ Yes ☐ No

D6 Do you currently employ a domestic migrant worker in your household? (Select one)

- ☐ Yes full time
- ☐ Yes part time
- ☐ No **GO TO D9**

D7 Which of the following do you currently provide to your domestic worker? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Paid holidays or annual leave
- ☐ Paid sick leave
- ☐ One-day off per week
- ☐ Paid maternity leave
- ☐ Overtime pay
- ☐ Access to her mobile phone out of work hours
- ☐ Ability to hold and keep her own passport
- ☐ Freedom to leave the house after work hours and on day off
- ☐ None

D8a What is your domestic worker's current monthly salary?

D8b Specify currency? (Select one)

☐ Thai baht ☐ Malaysian ringgit ☐ Japanese yen ☐ Singapore dollars

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D9 Which of the following best describes the financial situation of your household? (Select one)

- ☐ Money is sometimes not enough to buy food
- ☐ Money is enough for food, but sometimes not enough to buy new clothes
- ☐ Money is enough to buy food and new clothes, but not enough to buy a new television or refrigerator
- ☐ Money is enough to buy home appliances, but we can't buy a new car
- ☐ Money is enough for everything but not to buy a house or apartment
- ☐ We could afford to buy a house or apartment if we needed

D10 Which of the following best describes your ethnicity? (Select one)

Thailand	**Malaysia**	**Singapore**	**Japan**
☐ Thai	☐ Malay	☐ Chinese	☐ Japanese
☐ Other	☐ Chinese	☐ Malay	☐ Other
	☐ Indian	☐ Indian	
	☐ Other	☐ Other	

Thank you for your time and cooperation

Appendix II. KAP results tables

Thailand

Thailand		Sex		Location		Age			Total
Knowledge questions	Answers	Male n=517 (%)	Female n=517 (%)	Urban n=670 (%)	Rural n=364 (%)	18-24 n=151 (%)	25-39 n=393 (%)	40+ n=490 (%)	
K1A Do domestic workers, maids, in the country have the same work benefits as other workers?	Yes	44	39	46	34	49	41	40	**42**
	Domestic workers are not workers	10	8	7	12	16	11	5	**9**
	No, domestic workers don't have the same work benefits	19	15	17	18	8	17	20	**17**
	Not sure	28	38	31	36	27	32	35	**33**
K1B Does this country have a need for more workers?	No	16	14	16	13	19	15	14	**15**
	Yes, but mainly for high skilled jobs like doctors and lawyers	19	23	20	23	38	22	15	**21**
	Yes, but mainly for low skilled workers doing routine manual work	45	43	48	37	23	40	53	**44**
	Not sure	21	20	17	28	20	23	18	**21**
K1C What effect do migrant workers have on the national economy in this country?	An overall positive net effect	40	24	35	27	27	34	32	**32**
	An overall negative net effect	32	43	39	36	38	32	42	**38**
	No impact at all	11	12	10	15	10	15	10	**12**
	Not sure	17	22	17	23	26	20	16	**19**
K1D Why do some migrants come into this country illegally?	They are too lazy to get the right paper work	10	6	8	9	17	9	5	**8**
	Because of complex or expensive migration procedures	67	70	72	61	57	69	70	**68**
	They don't care if they break the law	16	17	15	20	17	14	19	**17**
	Not sure	8	7	6	9	9	8	6	**7**
K1E How has migration affected the crime rate in this country?	Migrants have caused the crime rate to go up significantly	36	42	42	34	28	35	46	**39**
	Migrants have caused the crime rate to go up slightly	37	38	39	35	36	39	37	**38**
	The crime rate is not impacted negatively by migration	13	12	11	14	19	13	10	**13**
	Not sure	13	9	8	17	17	13	7	**11**

Thailand		Sex		Location		Age			Total
Knowledge questions	Answers	Male n=517 (%)	Female n=517 (%)	Urban n=670 (%)	Rural n=364 (%)	18-24 n=151 (%)	25-39 n=393 (%)	40+ n=490 (%)	
K1F What do you think is the most common behaviour of migrant workers who have suffered abuse or violence?	They quietly accept it	15	12	15	12	18	14	12	**14**
	They seek help from the police, government, or their embassy	18	13	16	14	21	17	13	**15**
	They seek help from non-government organizations or fellow migrant workers	20	20	22	17	19	20	21	**20**
	They often don't report it because they are afraid	31	39	34	36	21	33	41	**35**
	Not sure	16	15	13	21	21	17	14	**16**

Thailand		Sex		Location		Age			Total
Attitude questions	Answers	Male n=517 (%)	Female n=517 (%)	Urban n=670 (%)	Rural n=364 (%)	18-24 n=151 (%)	25-39 n=393 (%)	40+ n=490 (%)	
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers should not receive the same pay and benefits as local workers	Don't agree at all	14	11	13	13	16	13	12	**13**
	Don't really agree	31	29	28	33	33	29	30	**30**
	Agree to some extent	38	40	39	39	34	40	40	**39**
	Agree completely	12	15	16	9	7	13	16	**13**
	Not sure	6	5	4	7	10	6	4	**5**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Our country does not need low skill migrant workers from other countries	Don't agree at all	11	4	8	8	9	9	7	**8**
	Don't really agree	35	32	36	29	29	33	36	**34**
	Agree to some extent	37	40	40	36	41	38	38	**38**
	Agree completely	11	18	14	17	11	15	16	**15**
	Not sure	6	5	3	10	11	6	4	**6**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers are a drain on the national economy	Don't agree at all	13	5	10	6	9	9	8	**9**
	Don't really agree	43	43	44	43	35	43	46	**43**
	Agree to some extent	29	30	30	28	31	31	28	**29**
	Agree completely	8	14	10	12	11	10	12	**11**
	Not sure	8	8	6	11	15	8	5	**8**

Thailand		Sex		Location		Age			
Attitude questions	Answers	Male n=517 (%)	Female n=517 (%)	Urban n=670 (%)	Rural n=364 (%)	18-24 n=151 (%)	25-39 n=393 (%)	40+ n=490 (%)	Total
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? We should make it more difficult for migrants to come and work in this country	Don't agree at all	10	4	7	7	11	8	5	**7**
	Don't really agree	39	39	39	39	33	34	45	**39**
	Agree to some extent	31	31	30	31	28	36	27	**31**
	Agree completely	14	18	17	14	15	15	17	**16**
	Not sure	6	8	6	9	14	7	5	**7**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrants commit a high number of the crimes in this country	Don't agree at all	5	2	3	5	7	4	3	**4**
	Don't really agree	20	11	18	12	13	16	16	**16**
	Agree to some extent	47	51	49	50	46	51	49	**49**
	Agree completely	18	28	25	18	19	21	25	**23**
	Not sure	10	8	6	14	16	8	7	**9**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers should not receive the same work conditions as local workers	Don't agree at all	9	9	10	8	10	8	10	**9**
	Don't really agree	44	51	48	46	36	43	54	**47**
	Agree to some extent	33	24	28	29	34	31	25	**29**
	Agree completely	7	10	8	9	9	10	8	**9**
	Not sure	7	6	5	9	13	8	4	**6**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers should not be able to join a union	Don't agree at all	9	8	8	10	10	10	7	**9**
	Don't really agree	43	42	43	43	38	42	45	**43**
	Agree to some extent	31	30	32	27	26	31	32	**30**
	Agree completely	11	12	11	12	13	9	13	**11**
	Not sure	6	8	6	9	14	9	4	**7**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? The influx of migrant workers threatens our country's culture and heritage	Don't agree at all	7	3	5	6	8	5	5	**5**
	Don't really agree	32	28	30	30	27	32	30	**30**
	Agree to some extent	39	45	42	41	34	41	45	**42**
	Agree completely	14	18	17	14	17	15	17	**16**
	Not sure	7	7	5	10	14	8	4	**7**

Thailand		Sex		Location		Age			Total
Attitude questions	Answers	Male n=517 (%)	Female n=517 (%)	Urban n=670 (%)	Rural n=364 (%)	18-24 n=151 (%)	25-39 n=393 (%)	40+ n=490 (%)	
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrants with illegal status who have broken the law should not expect to have any rights at work	Don't agree at all	6	4	4	7	7	8	3	**5**
	Don't really agree	18	10	14	15	13	15	14	**14**
	Agree to some extent	33	37	36	34	34	31	38	**35**
	Agree completely	38	44	43	36	33	40	44	**41**
	Not sure	5	5	3	8	13	7	2	**5**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers who end up being exploited only have themselves to blame	Don't agree at all	5	4	3	7	7	6	2	**4**
	Don't really agree	28	32	30	30	23	28	33	**30**
	Agree to some extent	47	40	45	40	37	45	44	**43**
	Agree completely	12	15	15	12	12	14	14	**14**
	Not sure	9	9	7	12	21	7	7	**9**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers should not be offered a path to citizenship under any circumstances	Don't agree at all	5	4	4	6	8	6	3	**5**
	Don't really agree	19	17	17	20	20	20	15	**18**
	Agree to some extent	40	39	40	37	34	37	43	**39**
	Agree completely	29	34	33	29	20	30	37	**32**
	Not sure	7	7	5	10	18	7	3	**7**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers have poor work ethics, you cannot trust them	Don't agree at all	5	3	4	4	7	5	2	**4**
	Don't really agree	26	27	30	20	23	26	28	**27**
	Agree to some extent	50	46	46	51	40	46	52	**48**
	Agree completely	10	15	12	13	10	14	12	**12**
	Not sure	10	10	8	12	20	10	6	**10**

Thailand		Sex		Location		Age			
Practice questions	Answers	Male n=517 (%)	Female n=517 (%)	Urban n=670 (%)	Rural n=364 (%)	18-24 n=151 (%)	25-39 n=393 (%)	40+ n=490 (%)	Total
K4A Have you ever spoken out against someone who was saying offensive things about migrants in this country?	Yes	23	19	23	17	20	21	21	**21**
	No, but if someone did, I would speak out	37	37	36	38	31	37	38	**37**
	No, and it's unlikely	30	36	34	32	34	31	34	**33**
	Not sure	10	9	7	14	15	10	8	**10**
K4B Have you ever helped a migrant integrate into your community or get ahead in their work?	Yes	32	25	31	25	27	30	28	**29**
	No, but if I had an opportunity I would	43	47	44	47	45	44	46	**45**
	No, and it's unlikely	15	17	16	15	13	15	18	**15**
	Not sure	10	11	9	14	15	11	8	**11**
K4C In the past 12 months, have you ever spoken to friends or colleagues about some positive contribution migrant workers make to our country?	Yes	35	30	33	32	30	33	33	**33**
	No but I think I will at some point	29	20	26	21	25	25	23	**24**
	No	31	42	36	38	33	35	39	**36**
	Don't remember	6	8	6	10	12	8	5	**7**
K4D Your friend is thinking of employing a migrant domestic worker to help out in their household and asks for your advice about the cost for work permit, which of the following would you recommend?	To pay for the work permit	46	40	46	38	46	44	41	**43**
	Deduct PART of the work permit fee from the domestic worker's salary	26	30	27	29	21	25	32	**28**
	Deduct ALL of the work permit fee from the domestic worker's salary	7	10	9	7	5	9	9	**8**
	Don't know	22	20	18	26	28	22	18	**21**
K4E You noticed an employer in your community who is employing migrant child workers, what would you do?	Report it to the police or an NGO and follow up to make sure they did something about it	30	33	33	30	36	33	29	**32**
	Just report it to the authorities	37	37	40	33	30	37	40	**37**
	Probably do nothing	11	5	8	8	11	7	8	**8**
	Not sure what I would do	22	25	20	30	23	23	23	**23**

Malaysia

Malaysia		Sex		Location		Age			Total
Knowledge questions	Answers	Male n=504 (%)	Female n=504 (%)	Urban n=672 (%)	Rural n=337 (%)	18-24 n=437 (%)	25-39 n=443 (%)	40+ n=394 (%)	
K1A Do domestic workers, maids, in the country have the same work benefits as other workers?	Yes	39	34	38	33	43	38	32	**37**
	Domestic workers are not workers	4	6	5	6	6	4	6	**5**
	No, domestic workers don't have the same work benefits	26	25	27	24	16	23	33	**26**
	Not sure	30	36	31	37	34	35	30	**33**
K1B Does this country have a need for more workers?	No	15	14	14	15	13	14	15	**14**
	Yes, but mainly for high skilled jobs like doctors and lawyers	19	20	20	19	26	24	12	**20**
	Yes, but mainly for low skilled workers doing routine manual work	54	52	53	53	42	47	65	**53**
	Not sure	13	13	13	13	19	14	8	**13**
K1C What effect do migrant workers have on the national economy in this country?	An overall positive net effect	34	26	30	28	27	32	29	**30**
	An overall negative net effect	45	49	49	44	42	44	53	**47**
	No impact at all	5	4	4	6	5	5	4	**5**
	Not sure	16	21	17	22	27	20	14	**19**
K1D Why do some migrants come into this country illegally?	They are too lazy to get the right paper work	7	4	5	5	9	6	3	**5**
	Because of complex or expensive migration procedures	68	71	73	63	67	70	70	**69**
	They don't care if they break the law	18	18	16	21	12	18	21	**18**
	Not sure	8	7	6	11	12	7	7	**8**
K1E How has migration affected the crime rate in this country?	Migrants have caused the crime rate to go up significantly	39	50	46	42	37	45	47	**45**
	Migrants have caused the crime rate to go up slightly	42	35	40	35	38	34	43	**38**
	The crime rate is not impacted negatively by migration	10	6	7	11	12	10	4	**8**
	Not sure	10	9	7	13	13	10	6	**9**

Malaysia		Sex		Location		Age			Total
Knowledge questions	Answers	Male n=504 (%)	Female n=504 (%)	Urban n=672 (%)	Rural n=337 (%)	18-24 n=437 (%)	25-39 n=443 (%)	40+ n=394 (%)	
K1F What do you think is the most common behaviour of migrant workers who have suffered abuse or violence?	They quietly accept it	10	12	11	12	13	10	13	**11**
	They seek help from the police, government, or their embassy	17	11	15	12	10	16	13	**14**
	They seek help from non-government organizations or fellow migrant workers	20	18	18	20	21	22	15	**19**
	They often don't report it because they are afraid	45	49	47	47	43	43	53	**47**
	Not sure	8	10	9	10	13	10	6	**9**

Malaysia		Sex		Location		Age			Total
Attitude questions	Answers	Male n=504 (%)	Female n=504 (%)	Urban n=672 (%)	Rural n=337 (%)	18-24 n=437 (%)	25-39 n=443 (%)	40+ n=394 (%)	
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers should not receive the same pay and benefits as local workers	Don't agree at all	9	9	8	10	13	9	7	**9**
	Don't really agree	28	31	31	24	35	29	27	**29**
	Agree to some extent	37	37	37	38	32	33	43	**37**
	Agree completely	23	19	21	21	15	23	21	**21**
	Not sure	4	4	3	7	6	6	2	**4**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Our country does not need low skill migrant workers from other countries	Don't agree at all	7	6	7	5	6	5	8	**6**
	Don't really agree	32	33	34	28	37	32	31	**32**
	Agree to some extent	34	37	35	36	33	34	38	**35**
	Agree completely	23	19	20	23	15	23	21	**21**
	Not sure	5	5	4	7	9	6	2	**5**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers are a drain on the national economy	Don't agree at all	7	5	6	6	8	5	6	**6**
	Don't really agree	35	41	41	33	31	39	41	**38**
	Agree to some extent	34	32	32	35	33	31	35	**33**
	Agree completely	16	12	13	16	12	15	15	**14**
	Not sure	8	10	8	10	16	10	4	**9**

Malaysia		Sex		Location		Age			
Attitude questions	Answers	Male n=504 (%)	Female n=504 (%)	Urban n=672 (%)	Rural n=337 (%)	18-24 n=437 (%)	25-39 n=443 (%)	40+ n=394 (%)	Total
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? We should make it more difficult for migrants to come and work in this country	Don't agree at all	4	4	4	5	5	3	6	**4**
	Don't really agree	21	21	23	16	24	20	20	**21**
	Agree to some extent	40	39	41	37	42	37	42	**40**
	Agree completely	28	30	27	33	23	31	29	**29**
	Not sure	7	6	5	10	6	10	3	**6**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrants commit a high number of the crimes in this country	Don't agree at all	4	3	4	3	5	5	2	**4**
	Don't really agree	30	30	30	29	29	26	35	**30**
	Agree to some extent	39	42	41	39	44	39	41	**41**
	Agree completely	18	18	18	18	15	20	17	**18**
	Not sure	9	7	7	11	8	10	5	**8**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers should not receive the same work conditions as local workers	Don't agree at all	5	5	5	5	8	3	6	**5**
	Don't really agree	17	19	22	11	22	18	17	**18**
	Agree to some extent	41	42	39	46	37	41	44	**41**
	Agree completely	33	31	31	34	25	34	32	**32**
	Not sure	4	3	3	4	8	5	1	**4**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers should not be able to join a union	Don't agree at all	3	5	4	4	6	3	4	**4**
	Don't really agree	22	25	25	20	26	22	24	**24**
	Agree to some extent	37	33	35	35	37	34	35	**35**
	Agree completely	31	28	28	32	21	32	31	**30**
	Not sure	7	9	7	8	10	9	6	**8**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? The influx of migrant workers threatens our country's culture and heritage	Don't agree at all	5	4	4	6	9	4	4	**5**
	Don't really agree	24	23	25	21	27	21	24	**23**
	Agree to some extent	41	38	39	41	41	39	41	**40**
	Agree completely	27	30	29	27	17	31	30	**28**
	Not sure	4	5	4	5	6	6	1	**4**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrants with illegal status who have broken the law should not expect to have any rights at work	Don't agree at all	1	1	1	1	2	1	0	**1**
	Don't really agree	8	8	10	5	7	8	9	**8**
	Agree to some extent	39	41	38	44	40	39	41	**40**
	Agree completely	48	45	46	47	44	47	46	**46**
	Not sure	4	5	6	4	8	5	4	**5**

Malaysia		Sex		Location		Age			
Attitude questions	Answers	Male n=504 (%)	Female n=504 (%)	Urban n=672 (%)	Rural n=337 (%)	18-24 n=437 (%)	25-39 n=443 (%)	40+ n=394 (%)	Total
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers who end up being exploited only have themselves to blame	Don't agree at all	4	6	5	4	6	3	6	**5**
	Don't really agree	27	27	29	23	28	23	31	**27**
	Agree to some extent	39	36	35	41	39	37	36	**37**
	Agree completely	25	20	23	21	16	23	25	**22**
	Not sure	6	12	8	11	11	14	2	**9**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers should not be offered a path to citizenship under any circumstances	Don't agree at all	2	2	3	1	5	2	1	**2**
	Don't really agree	14	15	15	13	16	14	15	**15**
	Agree to some extent	34	36	34	37	36	36	33	**35**
	Agree completely	46	41	44	43	34	43	50	**44**
	Not sure	4	6	4	7	8	6	2	**5**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers have poor work ethics, you cannot trust them	Don't agree at all	8	4	6	6	9	6	5	**6**
	Don't really agree	42	41	44	37	40	38	46	**42**
	Agree to some extent	27	31	27	35	30	30	29	**29**
	Agree completely	16	15	17	13	9	16	17	**15**
	Not sure	7	9	7	10	12	11	4	**8**

Malaysia		Sex		Location		Age			
Practice questions	Answers	Male n=504 (%)	Female n=504 (%)	Urban n=672 (%)	Rural n=337 (%)	18-24 n=437 (%)	25-39 n=443 (%)	40+ n=394 (%)	Total
K4A Have you ever spoken out against someone who was saying offensive things about migrants in this country?	Yes	23	20	22	20	21	23	20	**21**
	No, but if someone did, I would speak out	51	47	50	48	46	47	53	**49**
	No, and it's unlikely	11	13	13	10	11	14	11	**12**
	Not sure	15	20	15	22	21	17	17	**18**
K4B Have you ever helped a migrant integrate into your community or get ahead in their work?	Yes	27	17	21	23	19	22	23	**22**
	No, but if I had an opportunity I would	35	36	38	29	36	36	35	**35**
	No, and it's unlikely	22	26	23	26	22	26	23	**24**
	Not sure	16	22	18	22	23	17	19	**19**

Malaysia		Sex		Location		Age			Total
Practice questions	Answers	Male n=504 (%)	Female n=504 (%)	Urban n=672 (%)	Rural n=337 (%)	18-24 n=437 (%)	25-39 n=443 (%)	40+ n=394 (%)	
K4C In the past 12 months, have you ever spoken to friends or colleagues about some positive contribution migrant workers make to our country?	Yes	43	29	38	32	32	38	35	**36**
	No but I think I will at some point	22	17	19	21	18	17	22	**19**
	No	24	43	34	32	33	32	35	**34**
	Don't remember	12	11	10	15	17	13	8	**11**
K4D Your friend is thinking of employing a migrant domestic worker to help out in their household and asks for your advice about the cost for work permit, which of the following would you recommend?	To pay for the work permit	38	27	33	30	27	32	35	**32**
	Deduct PART of the work permit fee from the domestic worker's salary	35	42	41	33	37	37	40	**38**
	Deduct ALL of the work permit fee from the domestic worker's salary	6	6	6	6	4	7	5	**6**
	Don't know	22	25	20	31	33	24	20	**24**
K4E You noticed an employer in your community who is employing migrant child workers, what would you do?	Report it to the police or an NGO and follow up to make sure they did something about it	56	53	54	54	55	54	54	**54**
	Just report it to the authorities	24	27	27	24	25	25	27	**26**
	Probably do nothing	6	5	7	3	5	7	4	**6**
	Not sure what I would do	14	16	13	19	15	14	15	**15**

Singapore

Singapore		Sex		Location	Age			Total
Knowledge questions	Answers	Male n=502 (%)	Female n=503 (%)	Urban n=1,005 (%)	18-24 n=432 (%)	25-39 n=321 (%)	40+ n=349 (%)	
K1A Do domestic workers, maids, in the country have the same work benefits as other workers?	Yes	23	15	19	25	23	15	**19**
	Domestic workers are not workers	6	5	6	5	6	6	**6**
	No, domestic workers don't have the same work benefits	50	51	51	47	50	52	**51**
	Not sure	21	29	25	24	21	27	**25**

Singapore		Sex		Location	Age			
Knowledge questions	Answers	Male n=502 (%)	Female n=503 (%)	Urban n=1,005 (%)	18-24 n=432 (%)	25-39 n=321 (%)	40+ n=349 (%)	Total
K1B Does this country have a need for more workers?	No	10	9	9	9	10	9	**9**
	Yes, but mainly for high skilled jobs like doctors and lawyers	16	13	14	17	15	13	**14**
	Yes, but mainly for low skilled workers doing routine manual work	61	56	59	57	56	61	**59**
	Not sure	14	23	18	17	19	18	**18**
K1C What effect do migrant workers have on the national economy in this country?	An overall positive net effect	60	55	58	71	58	55	**58**
	An overall negative net effect	19	16	17	10	17	19	**17**
	No impact at all	7	8	7	5	9	7	**7**
	Not sure	14	21	18	15	17	19	**18**
K1D Why do some migrants come into this country illegally?	They are too lazy to get the right paper work	3	3	3	5	4	2	**3**
	Because of complex or expensive migration procedures	74	73	74	86	76	70	**74**
	They don't care if they break the law	12	11	11	5	11	13	**11**
	Not sure	11	13	12	4	9	16	**12**
K1E How has migration affected the crime rate in this country?	Migrants have caused the crime rate to go up significantly	13	12	12	12	13	12	**12**
	Migrants have caused the crime rate to go up slightly	37	44	40	34	40	42	**40**
	The crime rate is not impacted negatively by migration	36	26	31	39	30	29	**31**
	Not sure	15	19	17	15	17	18	**17**
K1F What do you think is the most common behaviour of migrant workers who have suffered abuse or violence?	They quietly accept it	20	16	18	25	23	13	**18**
	They seek help from the police, government, or their embassy	18	16	17	8	18	19	**17**
	They seek help from non-government organizations or fellow migrant workers	19	18	18	14	15	21	**18**
	They often don't report it because they are afraid	37	42	40	47	38	39	**40**
	Not sure	6	8	7	6	6	8	**7**

Singapore		Sex		Location	Age			
Attitude questions	Answers	Male n=502 (%)	Female n=503 (%)	Urban n=1005 (%)	18-24 n=432 (%)	25-39 n=321 (%)	40+ n=349 (%)	Total
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers should not receive the same pay and benefits as local workers	Don't agree at all	10	11	10	13	13	8	**10**
	Don't really agree	24	24	24	34	23	22	**24**
	Agree to some extent	44	46	45	39	42	48	**45**
	Agree completely	18	13	15	8	17	16	**15**
	Not sure	4	7	6	6	5	6	**6**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Our country does not need low skill migrant workers from other countries	Don't agree at all	26	25	26	32	28	22	**26**
	Don't really agree	42	46	44	40	40	48	**44**
	Agree to some extent	19	18	18	14	19	19	**18**
	Agree completely	10	5	7	7	7	7	**7**
	Not sure	3	7	5	7	6	4	**5**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers are a drain on the national economy	Don't agree at all	18	16	17	21	18	15	**17**
	Don't really agree	43	48	46	52	43	46	**46**
	Agree to some extent	25	20	23	14	23	25	**23**
	Agree completely	8	6	7	6	8	7	**7**
	Not sure	6	10	8	7	8	7	**8**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? We should make it more difficult for migrants to come and work in this country	Don't agree at all	16	13	14	17	16	13	**14**
	Don't really agree	34	35	34	38	30	36	**34**
	Agree to some extent	33	34	34	28	32	36	**34**
	Agree completely	12	11	12	11	14	11	**12**
	Not sure	5	7	6	6	8	5	**6**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrants commit a high number of the crimes in this country	Don't agree at all	18	13	15	24	16	13	**15**
	Don't really agree	37	35	36	36	32	38	**36**
	Agree to some extent	27	32	30	19	33	31	**30**
	Agree completely	9	5	7	7	8	7	**7**
	Not sure	9	15	12	15	12	11	**12**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers should not receive the same work conditions as local workers	Don't agree at all	18	16	17	24	18	14	**17**
	Don't really agree	39	44	42	44	37	44	**42**
	Agree to some extent	27	22	25	17	24	27	**25**
	Agree completely	11	11	11	6	14	11	**11**
	Not sure	6	7	7	9	8	5	**7**

Singapore		Sex		Location	Age			
Attitude questions	Answers	Male n=502 (%)	Female n=503 (%)	Urban n=1005 (%)	18-24 n=432 (%)	25-39 n=321 (%)	40+ n=349 (%)	Total
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers should not be able to join a union	Don't agree at all	14	19	16	26	18	13	**16**
	Don't really agree	38	36	37	42	37	35	**37**
	Agree to some extent	28	22	25	11	24	30	**25**
	Agree completely	12	9	11	7	13	10	**11**
	Not sure	9	15	12	15	9	12	**12**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? The influx of migrant workers threatens our country's culture and heritage	Don't agree at all	13	9	11	16	13	9	**11**
	Don't really agree	30	28	29	32	31	27	**29**
	Agree to some extent	32	43	37	27	29	45	**37**
	Agree completely	19	14	16	17	18	15	**16**
	Not sure	6	6	6	8	8	4	**6**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrants with illegal status who have broken the law should not expect to have any rights at work	Don't agree at all	6	4	5	7	6	4	**5**
	Don't really agree	14	16	15	20	13	15	**15**
	Agree to some extent	33	38	36	39	39	33	**36**
	Agree completely	42	36	39	28	37	42	**39**
	Not sure	4	7	6	6	5	6	**6**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers who end up being exploited only have themselves to blame	Don't agree at all	15	20	17	22	17	17	**17**
	Don't really agree	36	36	36	32	36	37	**36**
	Agree to some extent	29	25	27	28	26	27	**27**
	Agree completely	15	11	13	8	14	13	**13**
	Not sure	6	9	7	10	8	6	**7**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers should not be offered a path to citizenship under any circumstances	Don't agree at all	11	8	9	19	12	5	**10**
	Don't really agree	31	32	31	33	31	31	**31**
	Agree to some extent	33	33	33	23	32	37	**33**
	Agree completely	18	17	18	14	16	20	**18**
	Not sure	7	10	8	11	10	7	**9**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers have poor work ethics, you cannot trust them	Don't agree at all	19	18	18	25	22	14	**18**
	Don't really agree	40	44	42	44	39	43	**42**
	Agree to some extent	27	21	24	20	21	27	**24**
	Agree completely	9	7	8	4	10	8	**8**
	Not sure	6	11	9	8	9	8	**9**

Singapore		Sex		Location	Age			
Practice questions	Answers	Male n=502 (%)	Female n=503 (%)	Urban n=1005 (%)	18-24 n=432 (%)	25-39 n=321 (%)	40+ n=349 (%)	Total
K4A Have you ever spoken out against someone who was saying offensive things about migrants in this country?	Yes	20	12	16	21	17	14	**16**
	No, but if someone did, I would speak out	38	37	38	43	40	36	**38**
	No, and it's unlikely	33	35	34	28	32	37	**34**
	Not sure	9	16	12	8	12	13	**12**
K4B Have you ever helped a migrant integrate into your community or get ahead in their work?	Yes	21	17	19	21	19	18	**19**
	No, but if I had an opportunity I would	45	40	43	46	45	41	**43**
	No, and it's unlikely	22	30	26	21	23	29	**26**
	Not sure	12	13	13	13	13	12	**13**
K4C In the past 12 months, have you ever spoken to friends or colleagues about some positive contribution migrant workers make to our country?	Yes	35	26	30	38	31	28	**30**
	No but I think I will at some point	27	25	26	28	32	22	**26**
	No	29	36	32	21	28	37	**32**
	Don't remember	9	13	11	13	9	12	**11**
K4D Your friend is thinking of employing a migrant domestic worker to help out in their household and asks for your advice about the cost for work permit, which of the following would you recommend?	To pay for the work permit	49	48	49	45	52	48	**49**
	Deduct PART of the work permit fee from the domestic worker's salary	23	25	24	29	24	22	**24**
	Deduct ALL of the work permit fee from the domestic worker's salary	5	5	5	5	6	5	**5**
	Don't know	23	23	23	21	18	26	**23**
K4E You noticed an employer in your community who is employing migrant child workers, what would you do?	Report it to the police or an NGO and follow up to make sure they did something about it	32	28	30	36	35	26	**30**
	Just report it to the authorities	43	42	43	35	40	46	**43**
	Probably do nothing	12	9	10	8	13	9	**10**
	Not sure what I would do	14	21	17	22	12	19	**17**

Japan

Japan		Sex		Location		Age			
Knowledge questions	Answers	Male n=526 (%)	Female n=525 (%)	Urban n=698 (%)	Rural n=353 (%)	18-24 n=415 (%)	25-39 n=336 (%)	40+ n=600 (%)	Total
K1A Do domestic workers, maids, in the country have the same work benefits as other workers?	Yes	12	6	11	4	8	11	8	**9**
	Domestic workers are not workers	6	4	5	5	4	7	4	**5**
	No, domestic workers don't have the same work benefits	31	31	31	31	29	34	30	**31**
	Not sure	51	59	52	59	59	49	57	**55**
K1B Does this country have a need for more workers?	No	17	11	15	12	10	11	16	**14**
	Yes, but mainly for high skilled jobs like doctors and lawyers	16	16	16	17	22	24	10	**16**
	Yes, but mainly for low skilled workers doing routine manual work	37	28	34	29	29	30	34	**32**
	Not sure	30	45	35	42	39	35	39	**38**
K1C What effect do migrant workers have on the national economy in this country?	An overall positive net effect	38	30	35	32	41	37	31	**34**
	An overall negative net effect	27	23	24	26	17	24	27	**25**
	No impact at all	7	4	5	6	4	7	5	**6**
	Not sure	29	43	36	37	38	33	37	**36**
K1D Why do some migrants come into this country illegally?	They are too lazy to get the right paper work	12	11	12	11	16	12	11	**12**
	Because of complex or expensive migration procedures	43	43	42	44	37	45	43	**43**
	They don't care if they break the law	27	20	25	22	20	22	25	**24**
	Not sure	18	26	21	23	27	21	22	**22**
K1E How has migration affected the crime rate in this country?	Migrants have caused the crime rate to go up significantly	14	11	13	11	7	14	13	**13**
	Migrants have caused the crime rate to go up slightly	41	36	40	35	34	36	41	**39**
	The crime rate is not impacted negatively by migration	18	16	17	17	20	17	16	**17**
	Not sure	27	37	30	36	39	33	30	**32**

Japan		Sex		Location		Age			
Knowledge questions	Answers	Male n=526 (%)	Female n=525 (%)	Urban n=698 (%)	Rural n=353 (%)	18-24 n=415 (%)	25-39 n=336 (%)	40+ n=600 (%)	Total
K1F What do you think is the most common behaviour of migrant workers who have suffered abuse or violence?	They quietly accept it	6	5	6	5	7	7	5	**6**
	They seek help from the police, government, or their embassy	22	20	22	19	28	22	20	**21**
	They seek help from non-government organizations or fellow migrant workers	24	21	23	22	17	20	25	**22**
	They often don't report it because they are afraid	24	28	25	28	19	26	27	**26**
	Not sure	24	26	24	26	29	25	24	**25**

Japan		Sex		Location		Age			
Attitude questions	Answers	Male n=526 (%)	Female n=525 (%)	Urban n=698 (%)	Rural n=353 (%)	18-24 n=415 (%)	25-39 n=336 (%)	40+ n=600 (%)	Total
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers should not receive the same pay and benefits as local workers	Don't agree at all	21	18	20	18	33	14	19	**19**
	Don't really agree	33	34	35	30	27	32	35	**33**
	Agree to some extent	28	27	26	30	22	30	27	**28**
	Agree completely	8	7	7	7	8	8	7	**7**
	Not sure	11	15	12	15	11	16	12	**13**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Our country does not need low skill migrant workers from other countries	Don't agree at all	14	11	14	10	10	13	13	**13**
	Don't really agree	36	40	36	43	43	33	40	**38**
	Agree to some extent	25	24	26	23	24	26	24	**25**
	Agree completely	12	8	11	8	6	13	9	**10**
	Not sure	13	17	14	17	18	15	14	**15**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers are a drain on the national economy	Don't agree at all	13	10	11	13	14	14	10	**12**
	Don't really agree	36	37	36	36	26	27	43	**36**
	Agree to some extent	23	21	23	20	25	27	19	**22**
	Agree completely	12	8	9	11	11	8	10	**10**
	Not sure	16	25	21	21	24	24	18	**21**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? We should make it more difficult for migrants to come and work in this country	Don't agree at all	11	11	11	11	16	11	10	**11**
	Don't really agree	40	36	39	37	37	33	41	**38**
	Agree to some extent	23	22	22	25	22	25	21	**23**
	Agree completely	14	11	13	13	6	13	14	**13**
	Not sure	12	19	16	14	19	17	14	**15**

Japan		Sex		Location		Age			
Attitude questions	Answers	Male n=526 (%)	Female n=525 (%)	Urban n=698 (%)	Rural n=353 (%)	18-24 n=415 (%)	25-39 n=336 (%)	40+ n=600 (%)	Total
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrants commit a high number of the crimes in this country	Don't agree at all	9	7	7	9	8	9	7	**8**
	Don't really agree	31	32	32	31	43	29	31	**31**
	Agree to some extent	36	30	32	35	27	31	35	**33**
	Agree completely	12	10	12	9	7	14	9	**11**
	Not sure	13	21	17	16	16	17	17	**17**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers should not receive the same work conditions as local workers	Don't agree at all	19	14	15	18	22	13	17	**16**
	Don't really agree	40	41	39	43	38	40	41	**40**
	Agree to some extent	21	21	23	18	20	20	22	**21**
	Agree completely	8	8	9	6	5	10	7	**8**
	Not sure	12	16	14	14	16	16	13	**14**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers should not be able to join a union	Don't agree at all	24	17	20	22	30	19	19	**20**
	Don't really agree	43	41	43	41	35	40	45	**42**
	Agree to some extent	15	17	15	17	10	17	17	**16**
	Agree completely	7	5	7	5	6	7	6	**6**
	Not sure	11	20	15	16	20	17	13	**15**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? The influx of migrant workers threatens our country's culture and heritage	Don't agree at all	11	11	10	13	15	12	9	**11**
	Don't really agree	35	31	34	33	29	28	37	**33**
	Agree to some extent	28	28	28	27	30	28	27	**28**
	Agree completely	15	11	13	13	9	15	13	**13**
	Not sure	11	19	16	14	17	18	13	**15**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrants with illegal status who have broken the law should not expect to have any rights at work	Don't agree at all	7	7	6	7	6	7	6	**7**
	Don't really agree	26	23	25	23	32	19	26	**24**
	Agree to some extent	34	35	33	35	29	35	34	**34**
	Agree completely	24	19	22	21	15	23	22	**22**
	Not sure	11	16	14	14	18	15	12	**14**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers who end up being exploited only have themselves to blame	Don't agree at all	22	19	21	20	23	20	21	**21**
	Don't really agree	39	35	36	39	41	30	40	**37**
	Agree to some extent	16	16	16	17	11	17	17	**16**
	Agree completely	8	6	8	5	6	10	5	**7**
	Not sure	15	24	19	19	19	23	17	**19**

Japan		Sex		Location		Age			
Attitude questions	Answers	Male n=526 (%)	Female n=525 (%)	Urban n=698 (%)	Rural n=353 (%)	18-24 n=415 (%)	25-39 n=336 (%)	40+ n=600 (%)	Total
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers should not be offered a path to citizenship under any circumstances	Don't agree at all	15	13	14	15	22	13	13	**14**
	Don't really agree	41	38	38	41	33	38	42	**39**
	Agree to some extent	20	17	20	17	17	18	19	**19**
	Agree completely	9	9	9	9	5	10	9	**9**
	Not sure	14	24	20	18	23	21	17	**19**
K2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Migrant workers have poor work ethics, you cannot trust them	Don't agree at all	11	9	10	9	14	9	10	**10**
	Don't really agree	39	37	38	39	31	37	40	**38**
	Agree to some extent	26	26	26	26	24	27	26	**26**
	Agree completely	9	8	9	8	7	10	7	**8**
	Not sure	16	20	18	19	25	17	17	**18**

Japan		Sex		Location		Age			
Practice questions	Answers	Male n=526 (%)	Female n=525 (%)	Urban n=698 (%)	Rural n=353 (%)	18-24 n=415 (%)	25-39 n=336 (%)	40+ n=600 (%)	Total
K4A Have you ever spoken out against someone who was saying offensive things about migrants in this country?	Yes	7	4	6	5	4	7	5	**5**
	No, but if someone did, I would speak out	22	19	22	17	23	24	18	**21**
	No, and it's unlikely	49	49	47	51	47	45	51	**49**
	Not sure	23	28	25	27	27	25	26	**26**
K4B Have you ever helped a migrant integrate into your community or get ahead in their work?	Yes	7	5	7	4	5	7	5	**6**
	No, but if I had an opportunity I would	34	32	36	28	36	34	33	**33**
	No, and it's unlikely	41	43	41	45	40	39	44	**42**
	Not sure	18	20	17	23	19	20	18	**19**
K4C In the past 12 months, have you ever spoken to friends or colleagues about some positive contribution migrant workers make to our country?	Yes	11	7	10	6	9	11	8	**9**
	No but I think I will at some point	16	11	15	11	15	16	12	**14**
	No	63	70	65	69	61	61	71	**66**
	Don't remember	11	12	10	14	16	13	10	**11**

Japan		Sex		Location		Age			
Practice questions	Answers	Male n=526 (%)	Female n=525 (%)	Urban n=698 (%)	Rural n=353 (%)	18-24 n=415 (%)	25-39 n=336 (%)	40+ n=600 (%)	Total
K4D Your friend is thinking of employing a migrant domestic worker to help out in their household and asks for your advice about the cost for work permit, which of the following would you recommend?	To pay for the work permit	22	11	17	16	14	19	16	**17**
	Deduct PART of the work permit fee from the domestic worker's salary	25	21	25	21	26	24	22	**23**
	Deduct ALL of the work permit fee from the domestic worker's salary	11	13	11	13	10	11	12	**12**
	Don't know	42	55	48	50	50	46	50	**48**
K4E You noticed an employer in your community who is employing migrant child workers, what would you do?	Report it to the police or an NGO and follow up to make sure they did something about it	18	15	18	13	18	16	16	**17**
	Just report it to the authorities	31	25	27	29	20	25	31	**28**
	Probably do nothing	31	33	32	33	36	34	31	**32**
	Not sure what I would do	20	28	23	25	25	25	23	**24**

Due to rounding, numbers presented in this report may not add up precisely to the totals provided and percentages may not precisely reflect the absolute figures.

Public attitudes towards migrant workers in Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand

In 2010, the International Labour Organization (ILO) conducted a large-scale public opinion survey of 4,020 nationals in four Asian migrant destination countries – the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand – to assess public attitudes towards migrant workers.

In 2019, nearly a decade later, the TRIANGLE in ASEAN (ILO) and Safe and Fair (ILO and UN Women) projects have conducted a similar survey of 4,099 nationals to track trends in Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand, and adding Japan, given its emergence as an important destination country for low-skilled migrant workers in Asia.

Findings from the study indicate that support for migrant workers has decreased overall in the last nine years. Where there is public support for migrants, it is largely driven by the relationships people have with migrant workers, rather than demographic characteristics. Knowledge regarding migrant workers across the four countries remains low, and discriminatory attitudes prevail with significant numbers of members of the public in migrant destination countries stating that migrant workers should not enjoy equal working conditions with nationals.

However, the public in countries of destination show more positive support for policies that particularly address gender equality, violence against women, and problems in women-dominant job sectors. Respondents largely agreed that care work should be recognized as a profession, and that women migrant workers should receive maternity leave. Similarly, respondents expressed support for shelters when women migrant workers face violence, and for stronger enforcement against violence against women.

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