



Communicating Cross-Border Protection for Non-Procedural Indonesian Migrant Workers in Malaysia

Stellania Peny^{1*}, Sintia Catur Sutantri², Arif Rahman Hakim³, Widiandaru Wiryawan⁴

^{1,2,3,4}International Women University, Bandung City, West Java, 40173, Indonesia

Abstract. Non-procedural labor migration remains a persistent governance challenge in Southeast Asia, particularly along the Indonesia–Malaysia corridor. While regulatory and enforcement approaches have been widely studied, the role of policy communication in shaping migrant behavior and protection outcomes remains underexplored. This study examines how BP2MI’s policy communication functions as a determinant of migration governance through prevention, cross-border coordination, and discourse. This study employs a qualitative case study approach, combining in-depth interviews, document analysis, and institutional data from BP2MI and related agencies. The analysis focuses on preventive communication practices, cross-border institutional coordination in the Recalibration Program, and discursive gaps between policy narratives and migrant experiences. Descriptive statistical data on migrant placement and prevented non-procedural departures are used to contextualize qualitative findings. The findings indicate that preventive policy communication contributed to a decline in prevented non-procedural departures from approximately 54,000 cases in 2022 to 36,000 cases in 2023. Cross-border institutional communication emerged as critical to recalibration implementation but was constrained by data inconsistencies and delayed verification. Additionally, significant discursive gaps persist, as many migrant workers remain distrustful of institutional messages due to fear of enforcement, high perceived costs, and limited digital access. The study demonstrates that migration governance operates as a communicative process shaped by discourse, trust, and institutional interaction. Effective policy communication enhances compliance and protection, while communicative breakdowns reproduce migrant vulnerability. The findings extend policy communication theory by integrating liberal institutionalism and migration governance perspectives.

Keywords: Policy Communication; Migration Governance; Indonesian Migrant Workers; Recalibration Program; Cross-Border Institutions; Discursive Gaps

1. Introduction

Migration governance ideally requires not only robust legal frameworks and bilateral agreements but also effective policy communication that enables migrant workers to

*Corresponding author’s email: stellania.peny1@gmail.com, Telp-



understand, trust, and access protection mechanisms (Bal & Palmer, 2020; Low, 2023; Missbach et al., 2018; Nurlinah et al., 2020). From a communication perspective, public policy is not merely a set of regulations but a process of meaning-making through discourse, framing, and institutional messaging (Entman, 1993; Howlett, 2019). In the context of labour migration, clear and inclusive communication is essential to reduce information asymmetries that often push workers into irregular or non-procedural migration channels (Cingir, 2025; Low, 2025). Thus, the effectiveness of migrant protection policies is closely linked to how institutions communicate rights, risks, and procedures across national borders.

Existing literature highlights a persistent global phenomenon of labour migration characterized by uneven access to legal pathways and heightened vulnerability among undocumented or non-procedural migrant workers. The International Labour Organization (Bernards, 2016; Hepburn & Jackson, 2022; Nyland et al., 2014) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (United Nations, 2015; United Nations Population Division, 2011) estimate that millions of migrant workers worldwide remain outside formal protection systems, exposing them to exploitation, wage theft, and violence. Communication scholars argue that these vulnerabilities are exacerbated when institutional messages fail to reach migrant populations or are distorted by informal intermediaries such as brokers and recruiters (Abu-Lughod & Castells, 1998; Waisbord, 2019). Consequently, migration is increasingly understood as a communicative governance challenge, not solely a legal or economic one.

In Southeast Asia, the Indonesia–Malaysia migration corridor exemplifies these challenges. Malaysia has long been a primary destination for Indonesian migrant workers, particularly in domestic work, construction, and plantation sectors (Arifianto, 2009; Spaan & van Naerssen, 2018; Wijayanti & Turgel, 2021). To address the large presence of undocumented migrants, the Malaysian government introduced the Recalibration Program, a policy instrument that provides options for legalization or voluntary repatriation (Osman, 2023). While the program reflects a pragmatic governance approach, empirical reports indicate that its implementation is constrained by limited outreach, administrative complexity, and uneven understanding among migrant workers, factors that directly relate to communication effectiveness rather than policy intent alone (Arifin, 2021).

Scholarly discussions on migration management and recalibration programs have largely focused on legal compliance, labour-market needs, and human rights outcomes (Beduschi, 2021; Low, 2021). However, there remains a research gap in examining how state institutions communicate these policies and how such communication shapes migrant workers' decisions to legalize, return, or remain undocumented. While communication theory emphasizes framing, agenda-setting, and institutional credibility as determinants of policy uptake (Entman, 1993; Waisbord, 2019), these analytical lenses are still underutilized in migration governance studies, particularly in bilateral and cross-border contexts.

Within the Indonesian context, the Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Agency (BP2MI), established under Law No. 18 of 2017, represents a paradigm shift from placement-oriented governance toward a protection-centered approach. BP2MI is mandated to conduct preventive education, provide curative assistance through repatriation and reintegration, and coordinate with domestic and international stakeholders (Berlianti Berlianti et al., 2024; Efendi et al., 2021; Nurhayati, 2022; Suhaidir et al., 2025). Despite this mandate, BP2MI faces structural challenges such as limited



regional capacity, fragmented data systems, and uneven penetration of policy communication at the grassroots level. These constraints highlight the importance of analyzing BP2MI not only as a policy implementer but also as a communicative actor within transnational migration governance.

This study is significant both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it contributes to communication scholarship by integrating policy communication theory with bilateral cooperation frameworks, demonstrating how institutional discourse operates across borders to shape governance outcomes. Practically, the study offers insights for policymakers by identifying communication-related barriers that limit participation in legalization programs and proposing strategies to enhance message clarity, trust, and accessibility for migrant workers. Such contributions respond to broader calls for governance research that foregrounds communication as a core component of policy effectiveness (Howlett, 2019; Waisbord, 2019).

Accordingly, this research aims to analyze how BP2MI communicates protection policies for non-procedural Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia, how these communicative practices interact with Malaysia's Recalibration Program, and what communication-based challenges and opportunities emerge in bilateral migration governance. Using a qualitative approach that combines document analysis, institutional platform review, and in-depth interviews, this study seeks to advance understanding of cross-border policy communication and its role in creating safer, more inclusive, and rights-based migration governance.

2. Method

This study adopts a qualitative research design to examine the role of policy communication in managing non-procedural Indonesian migrant workers (PMI) to Malaysia. A qualitative approach is appropriate because the research seeks to understand institutional practices, meanings, and communication processes embedded in migration governance rather than to test causal relationships statistically (Ellis & Hart, 2023; Pitman, 1998; Regmi, 2024). The analysis focuses on how BP2MI communicates protection policies, coordinates with Malaysian authorities, and facilitates legalization and repatriation through the Recalibration Program, situating these practices within a broader framework of cross-border governance.

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with key informants, including Malaysian police officers responsible for handling migrant worker cases and stakeholders involved in the implementation of migration control and recalibration mechanisms. These interviews aimed to capture institutional perspectives on communication practices, enforcement procedures, and challenges faced by migrant workers in accessing official information. Secondary data consisted of official documents, regulations, policy reports, and statistical publications issued by BP2MI, the Ministry of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Immigration Department of Malaysia. These sources were used to contextualize institutional narratives and verify empirical trends (BP2MI, 2025).

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, involving systematic coding and categorization of interview transcripts and documentary materials to identify recurring themes related to policy communication, institutional coordination, and governance barriers (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To strengthen analytical rigor, the study triangulates qualitative findings with descriptive statistical data on the placement of legal Indonesian



migrant workers to Malaysia. This triangulation allows the research to link institutional discourse with observable migration trends, enhancing the credibility and interpretive depth of the findings (Denzin, 2017).

Table 1 Placement of Legal Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) to Malaysia (2019–2024)

Year	Number of PMIs to Malaysia
2019	79,659
2020	112,928
2021	72,934
2022	200,717
2023	50,917
2024	50,917

Source: Processed by Researchers based on BP2MI data (BP2MI, 2025)

Table 1 illustrate fluctuations in the placement of legal Indonesian migrant workers (PMI) to Malaysia between 2019 and 2024, confirming Malaysia's continued dominance as Indonesia's primary destination country for labor migration. Legal PMIs are workers who depart through officially regulated procedures, a system institutionalized since the 1970s as a response to domestic unemployment and as a mechanism for increasing national income through remittances. The sharp increase in 2022, reaching 200,717 workers, reflects post-pandemic labor demand recovery in Malaysia and the reopening of official migration channels. Conversely, the significant decline in 2023–2024 suggests the combined effects of tighter border controls, recalibration policies, and intensified preventive measures against non-procedural migration. This trend underscores the importance of BP2MI's regulatory and communicative roles in supervising contracts, insurance, and training to prevent smuggling and exploitation, while also highlighting how migration flows are sensitive to policy shifts and the effectiveness of institutional communication (Nurhayati, 2022).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Policy Communication as a Preventive Instrument in Reducing Non-Procedural Migration

The findings demonstrate that policy communication plays a central preventive role in BP2MI's strategy to reduce non-procedural migration to Malaysia. Rather than relying solely on regulatory enforcement, BP2MI deploys communication as a governance tool aimed at shaping migrant perceptions and decision-making before departure. Preventive communication is institutionalized through pre-departure socialization programs, dissemination of legal migration information, and structured messaging that highlights the comparative safety, legality, and rights protection embedded in official migration pathways. This approach positions communication not merely as an informational function, but as a behavioral intervention designed to discourage irregular migration.

A key aspect of BP2MI's preventive communication lies in its strategic framing of risk and protection. Institutional messages consistently emphasize the dangers associated with informal brokers, including exposure to labor exploitation, wage withholding, physical violence, and legal insecurity in destination countries. Interviews reveal that such framing resonates particularly in communities with prior experiences of deportation or migrant abuse. By presenting non-procedural migration as a high-risk choice and legal migration as a rights-based alternative, BP2MI constructs a moral and rational narrative



that aligns with framing theory, where message clarity and credibility influence compliance with policy norms.

The preventive effectiveness of this communication strategy is reinforced by its targeted geographic focus. BP2MI prioritizes regions identified as high-risk migration pockets, deploying socialization campaigns through local governments, community leaders, and training centers. These localized communication efforts aim to counteract broker-dominated information networks that often distort official procedures. However, the findings indicate that communication reach is uneven, with remote and border areas receiving less consistent exposure due to logistical constraints and limited institutional presence. As a result, preventive communication remains more effective in regions with stronger local governance capacity.

Importantly, preventive communication does not operate in isolation but is integrated with surveillance and verification mechanisms at departure points. Institutional messaging is reinforced by immigration checks, document verification, and inter-agency coordination, creating a layered prevention system that combines persuasion with control. This integration enhances message credibility, as prospective migrants perceive that official warnings are backed by tangible enforcement. Such synergy reflects communication governance models, where discourse and institutional action mutually reinforce compliance behavior.

Nevertheless, the findings also reveal structural limitations in BP2MI’s preventive communication. Digital platforms, while central to information dissemination, are not equally accessible to all prospective migrants due to disparities in digital literacy and internet access. In these contexts, informal brokers continue to function as primary information intermediaries, undermining official messaging. This highlights that while policy communication has demonstrably reduced non-procedural migration, its long-term effectiveness depends on expanding inclusive, multi-channel communication strategies that reach marginalized populations beyond formal digital infrastructures.

Table 2 Prevention of Non-Procedural Indonesian Migrant Worker Departures

Year	Prevented Non-Procedural Departures
2022	~54,000 cases
2023	~36,000 cases

Source: Processed by Researchers based on BP2MI reports

Table 2 illustrates a significant decline in the number of prevented non-procedural Indonesian migrant worker departures, decreasing from approximately 54,000 cases in 2022 to around 36,000 cases in 2023. This reduction provides empirical support for the effectiveness of BP2MI’s preventive communication strategies when combined with strengthened supervision at departure points. The downward trend suggests that consistent policy messaging particularly messages emphasizing legal risk, protection, and rights has begun to influence migrant decision-making behavior. However, the persistence of tens of thousands of attempted non-procedural departures also indicates that preventive communication remains an ongoing challenge, especially in areas where institutional reach and media access are limited. As such, the data reinforce the conclusion that policy communication is a necessary but not sufficient condition for fully eliminating non-procedural migration.



3.2. Cross-Border Institutional Communication in the Implementation of the Recalibration Program

The findings reveal that the effectiveness of the Recalibration Program is fundamentally shaped by cross-border institutional communication between BP2MI, Indonesian diplomatic missions (KBRI/KJRI), and Malaysian authorities. Rather than operating as a purely technical or administrative policy, recalibration functions as a communicative governance mechanism that requires constant information exchange, policy interpretation, and coordination across national systems. In this framework, BP2MI plays a pivotal role as an institutional mediator, translating Malaysian immigration regulations into comprehensible guidance for Indonesian migrant workers while aligning domestic administrative processes with destination-country requirements.

A critical dimension of this communicative role involves inter-institutional data exchange and identity verification. The recalibration process depends on accurate and synchronized data regarding migrant identities, employment status, and legal history, which must be shared between Indonesian and Malaysian authorities. Findings indicate that BP2MI's coordination with KBRI/KJRI is essential in facilitating document issuance, verifying worker status, and communicating procedural updates. When this communicative chain functions effectively, migrant workers are more likely to complete legalization or voluntary return processes in a timely and secure manner.

However, the study also identifies significant communication breakdowns that undermine program implementation. Data inconsistencies between Indonesian and Malaysian systems, delays in verification, and unclear procedural updates frequently create uncertainty for migrant workers. Interview evidence suggests that workers often receive conflicting information regarding eligibility criteria, administrative costs, and legal protection guarantees during the recalibration process. This uncertainty discourages participation and reinforces reliance on informal intermediaries, thereby weakening the intended protective function of the program.

These challenges underscore that the success of bilateral migration governance depends not merely on formal agreements or policy frameworks but on the quality, speed, and reliability of institutional communication. Even well-designed policies lose effectiveness when communication channels are fragmented or poorly synchronized. In the recalibration context, communication capacity emerges as a decisive governance variable that directly shapes migrant trust, compliance, and willingness to engage with official mechanisms.

From a broader governance perspective, the recalibration case illustrates how communication capacity constitutes an operational form of power in transnational labor management. The ability of institutions to coordinate messages, align data systems, and deliver clear procedural guidance determines whether bilateral policies translate into tangible protection outcomes. This finding reinforces the argument that strengthening cross-border communication infrastructures rather than merely expanding regulatory frameworks is essential for effective and humane migration governance.

Table 3 Cross-Border Institutional Communication in the Recalibration Program

Communication Dimension	Institutional Actors Involved	Key Challenges Identified	Governance Implications
Policy Interpretation	BP2MI, KBRI/KJRI	Differing procedural guidelines, delayed updates	Confusion over eligibility and procedures



Data Verification	BP2MI, Malaysian Immigration, KBRI/KJRI	Data inconsistencies, system incompatibility	Delays in legalization and repatriation
Information Dissemination	BP2MI, KBRI/KJRI, Malaysian authorities	Limited outreach, language barriers	Low migrant participation
Legal Documentation	BP2MI, KBRI/KJRI, JIM	Administrative backlog, unclear timelines	Reduced trust in official channels

Source: Processed by Researchers

Table 3 summarizes the key dimensions of cross-border institutional communication involved in the implementation of the Recalibration Program and highlights how communication challenges translate into governance constraints. The table demonstrates that communication breakdowns occur at multiple stages from policy interpretation and data verification to information dissemination and legal documentation. These disruptions not only delay administrative processes but also generate uncertainty and mistrust among migrant workers, ultimately discouraging participation in official legalization pathways. The findings underscore that improving the coherence, synchronization, and accessibility of cross-border communication is critical to enhancing the effectiveness of bilateral migration policies and achieving sustainable protection outcomes.

3.3. Discursive Gaps and Migrant Vulnerability in Policy Communication Practices

The findings reveal that discursive gaps in policy communication significantly contribute to the continued vulnerability of non-procedural Indonesian migrant workers, particularly those employed in informal and precarious sectors. While official institutional discourse frames recalibration and migrant protection policies as inclusive, humanitarian, and rights-based, many migrant workers remain disconnected from these narratives. Field evidence indicates that official messages often fail to resonate with migrants’ lived realities, especially among workers who have previously experienced raids, detention, or exploitation. This disconnect weakens the protective intent of policy communication and limits its capacity to alter risk-laden migration behaviors.

A central manifestation of this discursive gap is mistrust toward institutional messages. Migrant workers frequently perceive legalization campaigns as risky, associating official registration with potential arrest, detention, or deportation rather than protection. High administrative costs and unclear fee structures further reinforce skepticism, particularly among low-income workers who view participation in recalibration as financially burdensome. In this environment of uncertainty, institutional communication struggles to compete with broker-mediated narratives that promise speed, anonymity, and informal protection, even when such promises are misleading.

The study also identifies structural communication barriers linked to digitalization. Although online platforms and portals are designed to increase transparency, efficiency, and direct access to information, their effectiveness is uneven. Limited digital literacy, language barriers, and restricted internet access prevent many migrant workers from independently navigating official systems. Consequently, digital communication channels inadvertently exclude those most in need of protection, reinforcing informational inequality and dependency on unofficial intermediaries.



As a result, brokers and informal intermediaries continue to dominate information flows, shaping migrant understanding of policies through selective or distorted messaging. These actors often reframe official policies to serve profit-driven interests, presenting recalibration as costly, dangerous, or unnecessary while positioning themselves as safer alternatives. This distortion amplifies migrant vulnerability by perpetuating misinformation and discouraging engagement with official protection mechanisms. The persistence of broker-mediated communication underscores the limitations of top-down policy messaging that lacks sufficient grassroots penetration.

Taken together, these findings highlight the urgent need for inclusive, multi-channel communication strategies that bridge discursive gaps between institutions and migrant communities. Effective protection-oriented communication must move beyond formal announcements and digital platforms to incorporate community-based outreach, trusted mediators, multilingual messaging, and peer networks. Addressing these discursive gaps is essential to transforming policy communication from a procedural formality into a substantive instrument of rights-based migration governance that genuinely empowers migrant workers.

Table 4 Discursive Gaps in Policy Communication and Their Implications for Migrant Vulnerability

Discursive Dimension	Institutional Discourse	Migrant Lived Experience	Resulting Vulnerability
Policy Framing	Inclusive humanitarian protection	Fear of arrest and deportation	Low participation in legalization
Information Access	Digital portals and official notices	Limited digital literacy and language barriers	Dependence on brokers
Cost Communication	Administrative fees framed as standard	Perceived as high and opaque	Financial exclusion
Trust in Institutions	State guarantees of protection	Skepticism based on past enforcement	Avoidance of official channels
Information Intermediaries	Direct institutional messaging	Broker-dominated narratives	Misinformation and exploitation

Source: Processed by Researchers

Table 4 illustrates how discursive gaps emerge from misalignment between institutional communication and migrant lived experiences, producing layered forms of vulnerability. While official discourse emphasizes legality, protection, and humanitarian intent, migrants often interpret these messages through the lens of fear, financial insecurity, and past encounters with enforcement authorities. The dominance of brokers as information intermediaries further distorts policy messages, reinforcing avoidance of official channels. This table underscores that migrant vulnerability is not solely a legal or economic condition but also a communicative outcome shaped by unequal access to information, trust deficits, and discursive misalignment. Strengthening policy communication therefore requires addressing these gaps through inclusive, context-sensitive, and participatory communication practices.

3.4. Policy Communication as a Determinant of Cross-Border Migration Governance



The findings of this study demonstrate that policy communication is not a peripheral element but a determinant factor in the governance of non-procedural migration. The preventive role of BP2MI's communication practices confirms that migration governance operates through discourse as much as through regulation. This aligns with Entman's (1993) framing theory, which argues that how issues are framed by institutions shapes public understanding and behavioral responses. By framing legal migration as a rights-based and protective pathway while emphasizing the risks of informal brokerage, BP2MI's communication has contributed to measurable reductions in attempted non-procedural departures. These findings reinforce the argument that policy effectiveness depends on communicative clarity and credibility, not merely on legal authority.

From a broader theoretical perspective, the study supports liberal institutionalism, which posits that cooperation, norms, and institutions reduce uncertainty and enable collective problem-solving across borders (Kant, 2022). The Recalibration Program illustrates how migration governance is embedded in bilateral institutional communication between Indonesia and Malaysia. BP2MI's role as a communicative bridge between domestic stakeholders and Malaysian authorities reflects liberalism's emphasis on institutions as facilitators of cooperation and trust. The success and limitations of recalibration thus cannot be understood solely through legal frameworks but must be examined through the quality of inter-institutional communication that sustains cooperation.

However, the findings also reveal that communication capacity is unevenly distributed, which constrains governance outcomes. Data inconsistencies, delayed verification, and fragmented information flows between BP2MI, KBRI/KJRI, and Malaysian agencies weaken the operationalization of bilateral agreements. This supports policy implementation theories that highlight the gap between formal policy design and street-level or operational realities (Howlett, 2019; Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973). In this context, communication breakdowns function as implementation failures that directly affect migrant participation, trust, and compliance with legalization mechanisms.

The third major finding discursive gaps between institutional narratives and migrant lived experiences extends communication theory into the domain of migration vulnerability. While official discourse emphasizes humanitarian protection, migrants' perceptions are shaped by fear of enforcement, opaque costs, and prior experiences of marginalization. This finding resonates with Waisbord's (2019) argument that governance communication often fails when it does not account for power asymmetries and audience distrust. The persistence of brokers as dominant information intermediaries illustrates how informal communicative networks can override official discourse, particularly when state messaging lacks accessibility and cultural proximity.

Digitalization, although promoted as a transparency-enhancing tool, further complicates this dynamic. The reliance on online platforms for recalibration and policy dissemination reflects what Castells (1998) describes as the network society, where access to information is unevenly distributed. Migrant workers with limited digital literacy or language proficiency remain excluded from official communication channels, reinforcing dependency on brokers. This finding underscores that technological solutions alone are insufficient; without inclusive communication strategies, digital governance may inadvertently reproduce existing inequalities rather than mitigate them.

Taken together, this discussion highlights that migration governance is fundamentally a communicative process shaped by discourse, trust, and institutional interaction. The integration of policy communication theory with liberal institutionalism and policy



implementation frameworks provides a more holistic understanding of why some migration policies succeed while others falter. The study contributes to communication scholarship by demonstrating that protecting migrant workers requires not only laws and bilateral agreements but also sustained, inclusive, and credible communication practices that align institutional narratives with migrant realities. Strengthening cross-border communication capacity is therefore essential to realizing rights-based and humane migration governance.

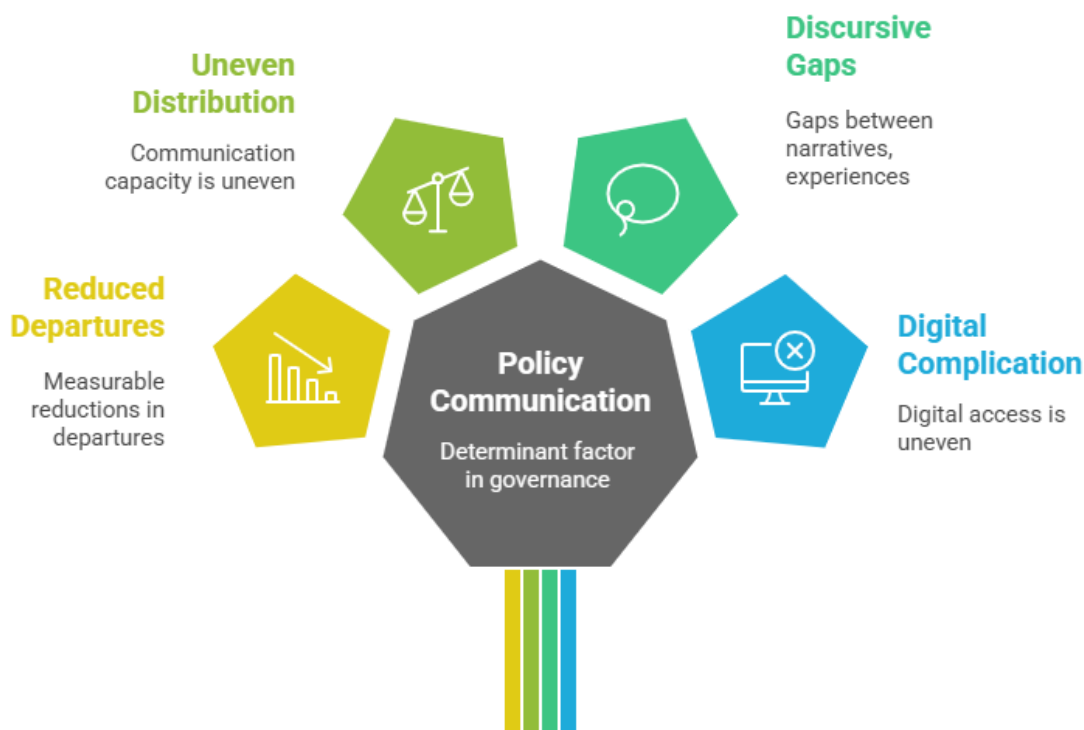


Figure 1 Policy Communication Impacts Migration Governance

Figure 1 visually synthesizes the study's core argument that policy communication is a determinant factor in migration governance. Positioned at the center, "Policy Communication" functions as the main driver influencing governance outcomes, illustrated by interconnected thematic nodes. On the positive side, effective communication contributes to measurable reductions in non-procedural departures, indicating its preventive capacity when messages are clear, credible, and institutionally reinforced. However, the diagram also highlights key constraints: uneven distribution of communication capacity across regions and institutions, discursive gaps between official policy narratives and migrants' lived experiences, and digital complications arising from unequal access and literacy. Together, these elements demonstrate that migration governance outcomes are shaped not only by legal frameworks and enforcement, but by how policies are communicated, accessed, and interpreted across borders, reinforcing the study's conclusion that communication quality directly conditions the success or failure of protection-oriented migration policies.

4. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that policy communication constitutes a decisive factor in governing non-procedural Indonesian migrant workers (PMIs) to Malaysia, rather than a



merely supportive administrative function. Empirical findings show that BP2MI's preventive communication implemented through pre-departure socialization, legal literacy campaigns, and institutional messaging has contributed to a substantial decline in prevented non-procedural departures, from approximately 54,000 cases in 2022 to around 36,000 cases in 2023. In parallel, official placement data reveal sharp fluctuations in legal migration flows to Malaysia, peaking at 200,717 workers in 2022 before declining significantly in subsequent years, reflecting the dynamic interplay between labor demand, regulatory control, and communicative intervention. These figures confirm that consistent and targeted policy communication can measurably influence migrant decision-making and compliance.

From a discussion perspective, the findings advance communication theory by demonstrating that migration governance operates as a communicative governance process shaped by discourse, trust, and institutional coordination. The Recalibration Program illustrates how cross-border institutional communication between BP2MI, Indonesian diplomatic missions, and Malaysian authorities functions as a form of liberal institutional cooperation, where information exchange and policy interpretation determine implementation outcomes. However, the study also reveals persistent discursive gaps between humanitarian institutional narratives and migrants' lived experiences, exacerbated by uneven digital access, limited literacy, and continued reliance on brokers as dominant information intermediaries. These gaps weaken the protective intent of policy communication and underscore that governance effectiveness depends on communicative capacity as much as on regulatory design.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the qualitative scope and focus on the Indonesia–Malaysia corridor limit the generalizability of findings to other migration contexts. Second, reliance on institutional data and interview-based evidence may underrepresent undocumented migrant perspectives that remain inaccessible due to fear and legal precarity. Future research should adopt comparative cross-country designs, integrate longitudinal data on migrant communication behavior, and explore community-based and peer-mediated communication models to assess how alternative information ecosystems can enhance rights-based migration governance. Expanding digital inclusion and examining broker networks as communicative actors also represent critical directions for advancing policy communication research in transnational labor migration.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

References

- Abu-Lughod, J. L., & Castells, M. (1998). The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture, Vol. 2: The Power of Identity. *Contemporary Sociology*, 27(2). <https://doi.org/10.2307/2654791>
- Arifianto, A. R. (2009). The securitization of transnational labor migration: The case of Malaysia and Indonesia. *Asian Politics and Policy*, 1(4). <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1943-0787.2009.01145.x>
- Arifin, M. Z. (2021). Pengaruh Kualiti Perkhidmatan Awam terhadap Kepuasan Warga Negara Indonesia di KBRI Kuala Lumpur pada Masa Pandemi Covid-19 di Malaysia. *Jurnal Administrasi Pemerintahan Desa*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.47134/villages.v2i2.23>



- Bal, C. S., & Palmer, W. (2020). Indonesia and circular labor migration: Governance, remittances and multi-directional flows. In *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* (Vol. 29, Issue 1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0117196820925729>
- Beduschi, A. (2021). International migration management in the age of artificial intelligence. *Migration Studies*, 9(3). <https://doi.org/10.1093/migration/mnaa003>
- Berlianti Berlianti, Sutriwani Hulu, Indah Lestari Sihombing, & Enjelina Simbolon. (2024). Kebijakan Jaminan Sosial Kepada Pekerja Migran Indonesia (PMI) Oleh Balai Perlindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia (BP3MI). *RISOMA: Jurnal Riset Sosial Humaniora Dan Pendidikan*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.62383/risoma.v3i1.496>
- Bernards, N. (2016). The International Labour Organization and the ambivalent politics of financial inclusion in West Africa. *New Political Economy*, 21(6). <https://doi.org/10.1080/13563467.2016.1183115>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Cingir, O. F. (2025). Bridging Governance Gaps: The Role of Alternative Learning Centers in Sabah, Malaysia, as Repertoires of Migration Governance. *International Migration Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01979183251359168>
- Denzin, N. K. (2017). Critical Qualitative Inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 23(1), 8–16. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800416681864>
- Efendi, F., Haryanto, J., Indarwati, R., Kuswanto, H., Ulfiana, E., Has, E. M. M., & Chong, M. C. (2021). Going global: Insights of Indonesian policymakers on international migration of nurses. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Healthcare*, 14. <https://doi.org/10.2147/JMDH.S327962>
- Ellis, J. L., & Hart, D. L. (2023). Strengthening the Choice for a Generic Qualitative Research Design. *Qualitative Report*, 28(6). <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2023.5474>
- Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51–58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x>
- Hepburn, S., & Jackson, A. (2022). Colonial Exceptions: The International Labour Organization and Child Labour in British Africa, c.1919–40. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 57(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022009420988063>
- Howlett, M. (2019). Moving policy implementation theory forward: A multiple streams/critical juncture approach. *Public Policy and Administration*, 34(4), 405–430. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0952076718775791>
- Kant, I. (2022). Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch. In *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*. <https://doi.org/10.12987/9780300128109-012>
- Low, C. C. (2021). Digitalization of Migration Management in Malaysia: Privatization and the Role of Immigration Service Providers. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 22(4). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-021-00809-1>
- Low, C. C. (2023). Migtech, fintech and fair migration in Malaysia: addressing the protection gap between migrant rights and labour policies. *Third World Quarterly*, 44(5). <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2022.2162380>
- Low, C. C. (2025). Contextualizing Fair Migration in Malaysia: From Sovereign Migration Governance Toward Developmental Global Migration Governance. *Journal of Population and Social Studies*, 33. <https://doi.org/10.25133/JPSSV332025.014>
- Missbach, A., Adiputera, Y., & Prabandari, A. (2018). Is Makassar a “sanctuary city”? Migration governance in Indonesia after the “local turn.” *Austrian Journal of South-East Asian Studies*, 11(2).



- Nurhayati, A. (2022). Implementation of Work from Home Institutional of Indonesian Migrant Workers Protection Agency (BP2MI) in the Second Year of the Covid-19 Pandemic towards Society 5.0. *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research*, 05(01). <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijsshr/v5-i1-02>
- Nurlinah, Haryanto, & Sunardi. (2020). New development, old migration, and governance at two villages in Jeneponto, Indonesia. *World Development Perspectives*, 19. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wdp.2020.100223>
- Nyland, C., Bruce, K., & Burns, P. (2014). Taylorism, the International Labour Organization, and the Genesis and Diffusion of Codetermination. *Organization Studies*, 35(8). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840614525388>
- Osman, K. (2023). Understanding the Concept of Integrity among Staff of Malaysian Immigration Department. *Islamiyyat*, 45(1). <https://doi.org/10.17576/islamiyyat-2023-4501-24>
- Pitman, M. A. (1998). Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 29(4). <https://doi.org/10.1525/aeq.1998.29.4.499>
- Pressman, J. L., & Wildavsky, A. B. (1973). Implementation: how great expectations in Washington are dashed in Oakland. *The Oakland Project Series*.
- Regmi, B. P. (2024). Qualitative Research Design: A Discussion on its Types. *Research Journal*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.3126/rj.v9i1.74415>
- Spaan, E., & van Naerssen, T. (2018). Migration decision-making and migration industry in the Indonesia–Malaysia corridor. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(4). <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1315523>
- Suhaidir, Marwazi, & Siti Raudhatul Jannah. (2025). The High Motivation of Indonesian Migrant Worker Candidates and Its Implications for Educational Financing. *International Journal of Post Axial: Futuristic Teaching and Learning*. <https://doi.org/10.59944/postaxial.v3i1.409>
- United Nations. (2015). United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. *World Population Ageing, United Nat*((ST/ESA/SER.A/390).
- United Nations Population Division. (2011). World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision. *Population and Development Review*, 1. <https://doi.org/10.1553/populationyearbook2010s77>
- Waisbord, S. (2019). The vulnerabilities of journalism. *Journalism*, 20(1), 210–213. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884918809283>
- Wijayanti, F., & Turgel, I. (2021). Migration Flow and Social Protection Policy: Case Study Indonesia – Malaysia. *Journal of Indonesian Applied Economics*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.21776/ub.jiae.2021.009.01.5>

