

## JUST RUNNING AWAY: THE ENGLISH LITERATURE'S PERCEPTIONS OF BEING A GLOBAL WORKER

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### Abstract

Amid Indonesia's vulnerable economic situation, the idea of finding jobs overseas has evoked numerous responses. The present study scrutinized the English literature students' perceptions regarding potential migration abroad, the countries where they want to work, and the language they need. The study was driven by the hypothesis that English language skill might be needed more abroad than in the Indonesian context. Up to this time, the government has strived to solve Indonesian unemployment, which continuously increases annually. Finding a job overseas can be an alternative to alleviating the government's economic burden and reducing the number of unemployed in Indonesia simultaneously. The present study employed a mixed method involving seventy-five English literature students. The participants were recruited conveniently from the English classes where the researchers teach. The instrument used was a written questionnaire followed by interviews with selected participants. The findings indicated that the participants had more ideas about visiting Asian countries. Furthermore, Europe, Arabia, Canada, and North America are the following countries that have the most potential to visit. The participants were also convinced that using English in Asian countries would be helpful, even though other Asian languages might be more suitable for use in the Asian continent than English. Other languages that the participants perceived essential to learn are Mandarin, Japanese, Arabic, Korean, and German. The study highlights the potential migration among educated Indonesians (i.e., English literature/English students), which would incur multiple benefits if substantial changes were enacted by authority.

**Keywords:** English literature, students, perceptions, global worker

### Abstrak

*Di tengah situasi ekonomi Indonesia yang rentan, ide mencari pekerjaan di luar negeri telah menimbulkan banyak tanggapan. Penelitian ini meneliti persepsi mahasiswa sastra Inggris mengenai potensi migrasi ke luar negeri, negara tempat mereka ingin bekerja, dan bahasa yang mereka butuhkan. Penelitian ini didorong oleh hipotesis bahwa keterampilan bahasa Inggris mungkin lebih dibutuhkan di luar negeri daripada dalam konteks Indonesia. Hingga saat ini, pemerintah telah berupaya keras untuk mengatasi pengangguran di Indonesia yang terus meningkat setiap tahunnya. Mencari pekerjaan di luar negeri dapat menjadi alternatif untuk meringankan beban ekonomi pemerintah dan sekaligus mengurangi jumlah pengangguran di Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode campuran yang melibatkan tujuh puluh lima mahasiswa sastra Inggris. Para peserta direkrut secara langsung dari kelas bahasa Inggris tempat peneliti mengajar. Instrumen yang digunakan adalah kuesioner tertulis yang diikuti dengan wawancara dengan peserta terpilih. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa para peserta memiliki lebih banyak ide untuk mengunjungi negara-negara Asia. Selanjutnya, Eropa, Arab, Kanada, dan Amerika Utara adalah negara-negara berikut yang paling berpotensi untuk dikunjungi. Para peserta juga yakin bahwa menggunakan bahasa Inggris di negara-negara Asia akan membantu, meskipun bahasa-bahasa Asia lainnya mungkin lebih cocok digunakan di benua Asia daripada bahasa Inggris. Bahasa-bahasa lain yang dianggap penting untuk dipelajari oleh para peserta adalah bahasa Mandarin, Jepang, Arab, Korea, dan Jerman. Studi ini menyoroti potensi migrasi di antara orang-orang Indonesia yang berpendidikan (yaitu, mahasiswa Sastra Inggris/jurusan Bahasa Inggris), yang akan mendatangkan banyak manfaat jika perubahan mendasar diberlakukan oleh pemerintah.*

**Kata Kunci:** Mahasiswa/i, Sastra Inggris, persepsi, pekerja global

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesian conditions are dynamically changing at the moment. Political, economic, and democratic factors have been the common issues that have triggered those concerned to speak up (Faisal, 2019; Harahap & Ekayanta, 2023; LPEM FEB UI, 2025 February 5). 'Indonesia is dark,' for instance, has loomed as one of the criticism themes awakening those on the throne to pay more attention to civil rights (Khozen, 2025 March 11). The issues indicating the Indonesian economy's slump, the rupiah's depreciation, and controversial issues regarding public services and newly proposed bills have triggered massive protests and concerns among Indonesian civil society (Khozen, 2025 March 11; Salma, 2025 March 24). Furthermore, the term '*#Kabur Aja Dulu*,' loosely translated in English as 'just running away', has become a trend online, indicating the young generation's attitudes toward the current Indonesian situation and their intention to secure employment abroad (Tempo, 2025 February 18; Salas et al., 2025).

Admittedly, numerous Indonesians have hinted at finding a job overseas as they perceive employment opportunities in Indonesia as still lacking and less rewarding than employment overseas (The World Bank, November 2017 November; Harahap, Sipahutar, & Baskoro, 2025 February 18). However, the idea of running away is not simple. It takes myriads of skills and capacities to do it. One of the requirements is international language skills. At the same time, the changes in the political, technological, and business landscapes have driven other languages to compete with English. The hegemony of Chinese business worldwide has increased the need to be proficient in Mandarin (Xie, 2021). Likewise, the expansion of Japanese automotive products has also driven people worldwide to learn Japanese (Teo, Hoi, Gao, & LV, 2019).

Hitherto, more scholars insist that English is still the only international language used for various purposes and events (Cohen, 2001; Crystal, 2003). For instance, English mastery for migration or asylum-seeking has been a prerequisite in many countries (Hokkinen & Barner-Rasmussen, 2023; Fortier, 2018). Simply put, the role of English has been declared as a lingua franca for various world needs, such as business, science, and political interaction (Crystal, 2003). Given the increasing complexities of earning decent employment, the need to identify the potential urges of the young generation to seek employment overseas is increasingly imperative.

Working abroad has provided the Indonesian government with higher revenues and improved the citizens' prosperity (The World Bank, 2017 November; Ukhtiyani & Indartono, 2020). Identifying the idea of working overseas among the young generation, particularly those struggling to learn in college, should be intensely scrutinized so that the higher education stakeholders can gather more information regarding their students' aspirations for working abroad, the place to work, and the skills required when seeking employment in certain countries. Unfortunately, the heroes/heroines of foreign

exchanges, a nationally dubbed attribute directed to those struggling overseas, commonly work independently without sufficient government support and protection. Numerous tragic stories experienced by those working overseas have also marred the gloomy pictures of Indonesian migrant workers (Uluwiyah, 2021; Dananjaya & Marsaulina, 2020; Pratama, 2025).

The theme of 'just running away' can be a momentum for the government to take more care of domestic employment opportunities, which are more inclusive and fairly accessible, and to identify employment opportunities for those aspiring to work abroad so that the potentially increasing unemployment in Indonesia can be declined significantly. The present study examined the English students' perceptions regarding the possibility of working abroad and the language they will probably use when migrating abroad. While analyzing the nexus between English and the variety of jobs has been extensively scrutinized (Thongphut & Kaur, 2023; Munusamy & Kaliappen, 2024; Lee, 2012; Shukri et al., 2021; Alshayban, 2022; Chan et al., 2022), exploring the drives of the college students' aspirations to work abroad, and the perceived languages to be used when working abroad are scarcely examined. The fact shows that the increasing mobility of people worldwide requires higher education institutions to equip their graduates to search for more rewarding jobs overseas.

Specifically, identifying the above factors will also help college students (i.e., English graduates) to have a more specific picture regarding their future work plans abroad. In a macro context, this research can also assist Indonesian employment policy-makers in figuring out more alternatives for providing their citizens, particularly those taking English degrees with more secure and financially rewarding work abroad, thus preventing them from being victims of bogus job opportunities or even human trafficking scams.

The research questions are formulated as follows:

1. What are the students' perceptions of the Indonesian employment opportunity?
2. What countries do the students perceive as a good place for employment?
3. What languages will the students have to use when they seek a job or work in the host country?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### a) Indonesian dynamics

Indonesia is a democratic country. As such, it allows citizens to participate actively in governmental affairs. Moreover, some factors have also driven those critical to go to the street and voice their concerns. Admittedly, the root of people's discontentment is typically related to the corruption practices that have become the cultural tradition of those staying in power. Scholars have vehemently confirmed that corruption practices constitute one of the most significant factors plaguing the business climate worldwide (Wishermann, Dang, & Sirait, 2022; Thede & Karpaty, 2023).

Furthermore, corruption practice in Indonesia is also exacerbated by other persistent problems such as infrastructures, rampant illegal levies, and bureaucratic practices (Cahyaningsih, 2015; Butt, Crockett, & Lindsey, 2024). To make things worse, the world economic landscape has drastically changed nowadays. The tit-for-tat reprisal between the giant economies (US vs. China) and other political instabilities might have shrunk Indonesian business climate leading to the worsening employment opportunities (Rahmah & Abbas, 2023; Kristofano & Febriani, 2024; Cahyaningsih, 2015; Yunan, Freyens, & Vidyattama, 2025).

### **b) Working away from home: The benefits of migration**

While risky, working abroad can also provide more benefits to some the workers, the families, and the government as well (The World Bank, 2017 November). The World Bank (2017 November) reports that there are generally some benefits that migrant workers earn, such as gainful employment, higher earnings, acquiring skills and experience, relieving financial strains on households, and lasting benefits. The fact shows that some Indonesians are not only able to prosper their families but also become economic contributors to Indonesian economic growth. In sum, the Indonesian wage, which is still comparably lower than that of other countries in Asia or other foreign countries, might trigger those wishing to have better wages by travelling abroad (Komarudin et al., 2023).

Due to the perceived benefits, there are more and more skilled and educated Indonesians who aspire for the chance to work abroad. Up to now, an increasing number of migrant workers struggling to find their luck overseas have been prevalent. Apart from the benefits, the data also shows the grim fact of the Indonesian migrant workers' reality in that there are more unskilled or less educated workers who find their luck abroad (The World Bank, 2017 November). The case of many migrant workers who are trapped and abused abroad has become a persistent fact, indicating the gloomy situation of Indonesian menial migrant workers (Pratama, 2025).

### **c) The role of English in the global employment**

One of the primary skills when working abroad is the mastery of a foreign or international language. As one of the most widely spoken international languages, English has been reported to have an important position as a mandatory language to master before working abroad (Muntasir & Nurviani, 2020). However, the epicentre of economies does not always stay in the same place. The growth of Asian as the new centre of economic activities has made other Asian languages important worldwide (Osashi, & Osashi, 2021 August 16; Hui, 2008 August 10). The growth of Chinese economy as one of the giant economic nations has also attracted people worldwide to learn the language (Xie, 2021). Likewise, the role of the Japanese nation in the world of technology, business, and investments worldwide has also prompted people to learn more Japanese (Teo et al., 2019; Huyen et al., 2022). With the growth of multiple languages spoken worldwide, the need to master

more than one language is also necessary. Given the more dynamic changes happen worldwide, the English language/literature degree is challenged to acquire more than just language skill in order to keep them more adaptable to different contexts or business societies.

## **METHOD**

### **a) Mixed method**

A mixed method is construed as a method that allows the researchers to identify more aspects through more varied data. For instance, the researchers can identify written questionnaires and verbal data, allowing the researcher to identify potential gaps among them. Dawadi, Shrestha, and Giri (2021) confirm that mixed-methods research (MMR) is a research methodology that incorporates multiple methods to address research questions appropriately and principled, involving collecting, analysing, interpreting and reporting qualitative and quantitative data.

### **b) Instruments**

Two instruments were employed in the present study: a written questionnaire and an interview. Rahman et al. (2024 as cited in Lasmana et al., 2024) defined an instrument as a tool used in the research process aimed to detect relevant phenomena in the context of investigation to prove or reject certain hypothesis. Firstly, a questionnaire was used to identify the respondents' perceptions regarding the chance to work abroad and other relevant factors. Furthermore, the Interview was conducted only with those who provided sufficient and interesting information.

### **c) Respondents**

The respondents recruited were the active English literature college students. The benefit of recruiting the students where the researchers work as the lecturers allowed the researchers to conveniently recruit them. The use of convenient sampling was chiefly due to the consideration that the participants were conveniently able to help the researchers in providing the data needed for the research (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012).

### **d) Sources of data and research data**

The sources of data were the written responses indicated by the instrument (e.g., students' perceptions of running away). More specifically, the research data to be analysed were their perceptions regarding the idea of running away and other relevant factors. The research data were also taken from the verbal perception identified during the interview conducted after the data collection in written data (i.e., questionnaire).

### **e) Data collection procedure**

To make the research more valid and reliable, the steps of the data collection procedure are arranged so that the researchers can prioritize the important steps of the research. Some important steps are arranged as follows: 1) The researchers reported the proposed study to the students, 2) The

researcher thoroughly explained the benefits of the research to the participants, 3) The researchers also warranted the right of the participants to be anonymous in the study, 4) The researchers explain the instruments to be used in the study to the participants, 5) The researchers distributed the written questionnaires to the participants after the class, 6) The researchers analysed the result of the written questionnaire, and identified important findings, 7) The researchers interviewed several students whose answers were found relevant to the study. 8) The interviews were conducted in English. The verbal data elicited from the respondents was analysed based on theme analysis (Creswell, 2008).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

#### a) Students' perceptions of Indonesian employment opportunity

A	Students perception on Indonesian employment opportunity	SD	D	D	A	SA
1	I think Indonesian economic situation is not really good.	-	-	10 (13.33 %)	32 (42.66 %)	33 (44 %)
2	I think it is getting more difficult to find jobs at the moment.	1 (1.33 %)	1 (1.33 %)	8 (10.66 %)	34 (45.33 %)	31 (41.33 %)
3	I think the job opportunities in Indonesia are not equally open for the whole people.	7 (9.33 %)	8 (10.66 %)	15 (20 %)	36 (48 %)	9 (12 %)
4	I think there are many unemployed in Indonesia at the moment.	2 (2.66 %)	6 (8 %)	9 (12 %)	27 (36 %)	31 (41.33 %)
5	I know that there are many companies stop their operations in Indonesia.	2 (2.66 %)	5 (6.66 %)	13 (17.33 %)	37 (49.33 %)	18 (24 %)
6	I know that there are many workers who are fired.	3 (4 %)	9 (12 %)	11 (14.66 %)	23 (30.66 %)	29 (38.66 %)
7	It is easier to work at the moment if you have insider.	6 (8 %)	9 (12 %)	9 (12 %)	37 (49.33 %)	14 (18.66 %)



8	I think Indonesian economic situation is quite good.	34 (45.33%)	22 (29.33 %)	11 (14. 66 %)	5 (6.66%)	3 (4 %)
9	I think it is quite easy to find jobs at the moment.	27 (36 %)	33 (44 %)	9 (12 %)	2 (2.66 %)	4 (5.33% )

The findings indicated the participants' perceptions of the Indonesian economic situation, which is not very good. Specifically, sixty-five participants of the seventy-five indicated their conviction (thirty-two agreed and thirty-three strongly agreed) on the gloomy outlook of the Indonesian economy. The condition is exacerbated by the dismissal of the workers in some companies, as indicated by twenty-two agreed and twenty-nine strongly agreed. Besides complaining about the economic condition, the participants also lamented the fact that working in Indonesia requires them to have an insider to help work in certain companies, as indicated by thirty-seven agreed and fourteen strongly agreed.

#### b) Students' perceptions of the countries to seek employment

B	The host countries to seek employment	SD	D	D	A	SA
1	There are more job opportunities to work abroad than in Indonesia.	16 (21.33 %)	12 (16 %)	8 (10. 66%)	17 (22.66 %)	22 (29.33 %)
2	The salary when working abroad is much more rewarding	3 (4 %)	7 (9.33 %)	6 (8%)	36 (48 %)	23 (30.66%)
3	I think working in European countries is more rewarding.	5 (6.66 %)	7 (9.33 %)	11 (14. 66 %)	23 (30.66%)	29 (38.66%)
4	I think working in Asian countries is more rewarding.	3 (4 %)	6 (8%)	9 (12 %)	27 (36 %)	30 (40 %)
5	I think working in Arabian countries is more rewarding.	9 (12 %)	14 (18.66 %)	9 (12 %)	27 (36 %)	16 (21.33 %)
6	I think working in African countries is more rewarding.	13 (17.33 %)	27 (36 %)	29 (38.66 %)	3 (4 %)	3 (4 %)

7	I think working in North America is more rewarding.	6 (8%)	18 (24 %)	23 (30.66 %)	25 (33.33 %)	3 (4 %)
8	I think working in South America is more rewarding.	16 (21.33 %)	25 (33.33 %)	27 (36 %)	6 (8%)	1 (1.33 %)
9	I think working in Canada is more rewarding.	11 (14.66 %)	13 (17.33 %)	14 (18.66 %)	26 (34.66%)	11 (14.66 %)

The findings indicated that most participants positively perceived the chances of working abroad, with seventeen agreed and twenty-two strongly agreed. More specifically, most participants perceived that working abroad offered them a more rewarding salary than those in local job markets, with thirty-six agreed and twenty-three strongly agreed. Precisely, they indicated their preference for working in Asia compared to other countries, with twenty-seven agreed and thirty strongly agreed. It was also found that European countries belong to the second choice, as indicated by twenty-three agreed and twenty-nine strongly agreed. Interestingly, Arab countries were more attractive to the participants than Canada, America or Latin America.

**c) Students' perceptions of the International languages required when working/seeking employment abroad**

C	International languages used when working/seeking employment abroad	SD	D	D	A	SA
1	I think English is an important international language to seek for an employment abroad.	4 (5.33%)	6 (8%)	9 (12 %)	25 (33.33 %)	31 (41.33 %)
2	I think German is an important international language to seek for an employment.	7 (9.33 %)	16 (21.33 %)	19 (25.33%)	24 (32 %)	9 (12 %)
3	I think Spanish or Portuguese is an important international language to seek for an employment.	9 (12 %)	13 (17.33 %)	16 (21.33 %)	18 (24 %)	19 (25.33 %)



4	I think Mandarin is an important international language to seek for an employment abroad.	2 (2.66 %)	4 (5.33%)	11 (14.66 %)	27 (36 %)	31 (41.33 %)
5	I think Japanese is an important international language to seek for an employment abroad.	3 (4 %)	7 (9.33 %)	14 (18.66 %)	26 (34.66%)	25 (33.33 %)
6	I think Korean is an important international language to seek for an employment abroad.	5 (6.66 %)	8 (10.66 %)	23 (30.66 %)	27 (36 %)	12 (16 %)
7	I think Arabic is an important international language to seek for an employment abroad.	4 (5.33%)	9 (12 %)	19 (25.33%)	28 (37.33 %)	15 (20 %)

The finding indicated that the role of English remained important for the participants. Despite working in Asian countries, English was found to be the second most important language in Asia, as indicated by twenty-five agreed and thirty-one strongly agreed. They perceived that learning other Asian languages, particularly Mandarin, was necessary when working in Asian continents, surpassing English, with twenty-seven agreed and thirty-one strongly agreed. The other Asian countries perceived as important by the participants were Japanese, Arabic, and Korean. It was also found that Arabic was perceived as more popular than German, Spanish, and Portuguese.

#### d) Important themes identified from verbal statements in the interview

The following present only few extracts from the selected participants providing relevant information regarding the above research questions. The participants were selected based on the relevance in responding the questionnaire.

Extracts	Themes
Working abroad is possible and beneficial although I am not sure our skills and knowledge are sufficient for this plan.	a) Working abroad is possible and beneficial.
I am not pretty sure whether or not to go abroad for work, but it is not a bad idea anyway since working in Indonesia is not very easy at the moment. One thing for sure, the skills we have as language students should commensurate the requirements for those working abroad.	b) Skills and knowledge should be more improved.

<p>Going abroad has been my passion. That is why I am taking English.</p> <p>My relative is away, but she has been happy since. She keeps telling us to go to Europe, and if we wish to work there, the people are tolerant and productive. In addition to English, the other language which is important is German.</p>	<p>a) Learning English to go abroad.</p> <p>b) Learning other international languages is important when working abroad.</p>
<p>I think English is spoken in many countries, but other international languages, such as Mandarin, Japanese, Korean, or Arabic, should also be learned.</p> <p>In my opinion, before going abroad we need to ensure that we have sufficiently learned other international language skills. Although English is commonly used abroad, but learning other language, such as Mandarin, or Japanese can help us have much closer relationship with those living there.</p>	<p>a) Multilingual skills are imperative to go abroad.</p> <p>b) Asian language skills are imperative to learn.</p>
<p>If I go abroad, I don't know where to work and how? So, I just want to use some information from friends or anyone I know and have already lived abroad. So, information from friends or colleagues who live abroad is a determinant factor.</p> <p>It is difficult to say 'where you are working?' as you just arrive in a strange place where you don't know each other so finding a safe place with good friends is the most important thing. After that, we can find information regarding a job.</p> <p>I heard some employment webs might offer us a definite job, but you need to be careful with that, and you need to determine whether your skill is relevant to the position offered.</p>	<p>a) The job is not certain but information regarding the job from informant will be decisive.</p> <p>b) The job vacancy offered in the employment web might be more credible but relevance checking is necessary.</p>
<p>I am not sure that I am going to travel soon after graduation, but I think Going to Asia is the most reasonable for now, as the</p>	<p>a) Cultural relevance, religion, distance, and the cost of travelling belong to</p>

<p>distance, the cost, and the cultural backgrounds are not very different.</p> <p>I prefer to go to Asian countries, as they are much closer and it is quite safe. You cannot imagine if you go abroad and being alone and surrounded with those having different cultures, religions, and backgrounds.</p> <p>My relative is working in one of Arab countries. He enjoys living and working there. It is very safe, and he can also perform the Hajj while staying or working there, of course not on the peak moment.</p>	<p>the most influential factors for working in the Asian continents.</p>
<p>So far, Asian countries have been developing faster than other countries, including European and Americans.</p> <p>I read the news and watch TV, how war or political conflict worldwide affects the world situation nowadays. I see how European countries are swarmed with Ukrainian refugees and other war-torn countries in Arab or African countries as well. So, going to Europe is good for studying but for working, may be it is quite difficult now.</p> <p>If I have to go to Europe, I think Germany is the most possible country to stay, everything is free, education is free and the living standard is very high. Certainly, to stay or to be a permanent resident there, you must have very good qualification, and be good in German.</p> <p>Do you know that the government in U.S under Trump has created some illogical and racial policies affecting most Asian, African or even Latino immigrants who are actually beneficial to American economies. Who will work with such a low pay in the U.S. except the immigrants?</p>	<p>a) Asian economies are better than other countries.</p> <p>b) Political factors might have affected the situation in European countries.</p> <p>c) Other European language, such as German is important to learn.</p> <p>d) American's policy regarding immigration created by the newly elected President Trump is perceived not safe and</p>

	conducive for immigration, particularly for Asian immigrants.
I am learning other languages (e.g., Mandarin, and Japanese) to support my migration into Asian countries.	a) Learning other international language is imperative.
For me, Asian is better than other countries, it doesn't cost you much to visit them, and you can possibly work part-time too. I learn Korean as I wish to work there.	a) Asian countries are perceived better to visit.  b) Other Asian language, such as Korean needs to be learned.
The new government in America does not seem friendly and treat immigrant inhumanely. I watch on TV how Trump has ordered arrest and expulsion to those coming to the U.S. illegally. In my opinion, the U.S. government should also admit that they also take benefit of having the cheap workers coming to the U.S.	a) The new America under the new regime has created unsafe working conditions for migrant workers.
European countries are better than America at the moment, although, some immigrants or even refugees from the war-torn countries, let say from Ukraine might also stay there.	a) European is considered better than America.  b) There are more immigrants coming to Europe for various reasons.
My relative is working in Qatar, and he makes more money..., so learning Arabic is important besides English. The country welcomes and protects migrants. As a Muslim, working in Qatar helps me work, and enhance spiritual piety..	a) Working in rich Arab countries, particularly to those having similar cultures/religion might be beneficial.
I don't want to work abroad at this time, but it is a good idea to provide more language skills to us, because we never know where we will finally work and how we work after graduation. Everything is unpredictable now, ...especially in our country. It is	a) Learning more international language skills is imperative as the

so hard to find jobs here. I am not sure that our skill is enough to secure a decent job.	competition to have job is getting more difficult.
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## DISCUSSION

### a) It is economy factor that makes movement

The data suggest that the drive to go away or become a global worker is primarily economic and not political. The finding confirms the previously conducted studies in that the primary drive of migrating or working abroad is chiefly economic (Khan et al., 2023; Park, Lee, & Park, 2024; Sunagic, 2024). International Organization for Migration [IOM] (2025) suggests three benefits of international migration: economic boost, contribution through remittances, and demographic rejuvenation. In the case of the American labor market, for instance, Latin American immigrants made up only 3.5 % of the labor force in the United States. However, they contributed 11.5% of the economic growth between 2009 and 2017. Specifically, young migrant workers contribute their skills, knowledge, and energy to the labor market, which is highly important to the sectors requiring more workers. In sum, migration, which is commonly driven by economic factors, is beneficial for the sending and receiving countries.

However, in a realistic situation, the process of migration to other countries will generally face some potential risks and drawbacks, such as health-related problems caused by being overworked in the new places, social/racial discrimination, or violence that might happen to the migrant workers (Setijaningrum et al., 2023; Innes et al., 2024). Given the gravity of the potential risks, some efforts should be conducted by the governments and other related stakeholders, such as developing comprehensive risk awareness programs covering physical, emotional, and psychological challenges, using diverse channels (hotlines, online platforms, and workshops) to reach a broader audience, strengthening embassy services, and many more (Bogdan, 2023). Furthermore, extensive joint attempts among government bodies (e.g., central government, representative of the Indonesian republic, B2PMI, regional and even local government) are required to ensure that those working overseas are protected not only from the process of departure but also when arriving and working overseas (Ibrahim, & Uwiyono, 2023). Lastly, the government should not perceive the trending hashtag ‘*#Kabur Aja Dulu*’ as an unpatriotic or political movement (Aditya & Ramadhan, 2025 February 17); in fact, they should appreciate this idea as a genuine drive of the youth who strive to find their solution amid the economic predicaments.

### b) A good place to run away for money

Based on the data, it can be identified that the participants mostly preferred to work in the Asian continent. Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and some Arab countries are places that they perceive as being more likely to work. Culturally, these countries are relatively similar to Indonesia, thus resulting in a less complicated migration process and adaptation to the new working environment. The preference toward working in the Asian continent compared with Europe, America, or even Latin America is relevant to the previous findings in that most Indonesian workers prefer to work in their neighbouring countries, such as Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, Korea, or Japan (Budianto & Widarahesty, 2024).

In addition, the present study corresponds to OECD's data (2022) in that most of the preferred countries to work abroad mostly come from Asian continents. Specifically, Malaysia is generally perceived as the main destination for temporary Indonesian migrant workers, followed by Chinese Taipei, Singapore, Hong Kong (China) and Saudi Arabia. Regarding the OECD context, Japan and Korea are the main destinations for Indonesian nationals who wish to work abroad. Despite having some instruments to protect Indonesian migrant workers abroad, the International Organization for Migration [IOM] (2024) identified that the government of Indonesia needs to have more solid cooperation with other countries where their citizens are working. Specifically, for instance, while Indonesia has systems to track and identify missing migrants within its national territory, it lacks agreements and arrangements with other countries. Further studies need to be done on this matter.

### **c) What else needed to prepare before migrating?**

The findings also indicated that would-be global workers must master sufficient skills/knowledge before working abroad. Mastering an international language, for instance, is not the only skill they should possess when migrating abroad. With the growing tendency of multilingualism and plurilingualism (King, 2018), mastery of other language skills is increasingly necessary so that the would-be migrant workers can communicate more intimately in a much larger environment or context (Haukås, Storto, & Tiurikova, 2024). It is also important to identify some potentially lucrative business ventures operating overseas and needing employment so that the graduates can figure out where they will work even prior to their departure abroad.

Despite being important, the role of an international language will not cover all aspects required for being a global worker. The administrator should identify some factors that allow the students to have more relevant skills and find other non-stereotypical jobs (e.g., English teaching, staff, or other service jobs). Lastly, despite being meagre in number, the job of being an Indonesian language teacher abroad might also be an alternative to choose from (VILTA, n.d.). As capable language graduates, the government should encourage the incorporation of an international Indonesian language teaching program, allowing the graduates to teach the Indonesian language



abroad. In sum, employment data from the government is highly necessary so that the would-be migrant workers can suit their qualifications with the relevant jobs available in the job market overseas. The availability of comprehensive data can also be useful to prevent the potential brain drain that might happen if the migration is not carefully regulated (Afifi Elfinur, 2021).

## CONCLUSION

The preference for migrating to Asia indicates the English students' sensible point of view. Furthermore, the reasons for proximity, cultural closeness, and the cost of travelling to Asian countries, which are much more affordable than on other continents, signify the complicated concept of running away that multiple stakeholders, including the government bodies, should carefully manage. The use of an international language, partially used in Asian countries (i.e., Mandarin, Japanese, and Korean), should be provided by the college administrators so that the students can probably acquire the opportunity to work on this continent. Providing a generally accepted syllabus is insufficient if English graduates are expected to be more competitive globally. Some potentially significant improvements to students' employability skills, including new foreign language skills, international teaching certificates, and other relevant skills, should be offered to them.

## SUGGESTION

The present study highlights the issue of working abroad and its relation to the language used for employment overseas, thus highlighting the alternatives of employment opportunities, particularly for those with sufficient skills and international language mastery, so that the so-called unemployed graduates can be prevented. Despite highlighting several important aspects, such as identifying the chances of finding work abroad and diversifying the potential employability skills that English literature students should acquire in finding jobs overseas, the study does not elicit many participants. In addition, the recruitment of the participants, who were the researchers' students and were recruited conveniently, might have increased a potential bias. Further studies should involve students from different institutions and researchers. It is also essential that future studies on potential migration in the English literature department involve more varied stakeholders, such as students, lecturers, college administrators/management, potential employers, or government stakeholders supervising the migration process or the foreign embassy in which the students can probably work.

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