MAPPING MIGRANTS' BUSINESSES IN THE KLANG VALLEY FROM FACEBOOK COMMENTS

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Abstract

This paper focuses on public opinion towards migrant businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. Opening a business in Malaysia involves fulfilling various requirements, including high capital for foreign-owned companies' registration. However, it was observed that several migrant workers who transformed into entrepreneurs were operating small to medium-sized businesses openly nationwide despite various restrictions; some are informal businesses, and some are legitimate businesses run under local owner's registration. Comments posted on the Facebook pages of two (2) enforcement agencies and six (6) city councils related to the governance of migrants or businesses in Malaysia were observed, collected and analysed to create a mapping of migrants' entrepreneurship through netnography. An observational study was conducted to thematically analyse Facebook comments which mentioned locations of migrants' businesses in the attempts to answer the research question of `Where are the main locations of migrant businesses in the Klang Valley?'. Business premises in the Klang Valley were mainly observed in the outskirt areas of the city centre, particularly in Klang, Shah Alam, and Sungai Buloh. Other states such as Johor, Penang, and Sabah were observed to have many migrants' businesses due to the high number of economic activities. Popular ethnic enclaves in the Klang Valley, such as Chow Kit and Petaling Street, were not mentioned as much as Klang District. This pattern showed the emergence of new ethnic enclaves in suburban areas. Active participation between authorities should be prioritised to solve the root cause of the issues, such as the demarcation and governance issues between city councils and other enforcement agencies.

Keywords: *migrant business, ArcGIS, Facebook comment, location theory, netnography.*

INTRODUCTION

Business registration for non-citizens is restricted in Malaysia. They are only allowed to register companies that require strong financial capital of up to a million ringgit. However, migrants openly operate small to medium-sized formal- and informal businesses in Malaysia. Some legitimate businesses are registered under local owners see Azizah Kassim, 2015b; Golam Hassan, 2009).

There is no exact data on the number of migrants businesses in Malaysia due to the limitations and strict requirements for foreign business registration. *Suruhanjaya Syarikat Malaysia, SSM* (Companies Commission of Malaysia) records the number of registered foreign companies that have strong financial capitals and strict requirements for their board members. However, there is no available data for small and medium businesses that migrants own. Very little is known about migrants' businesses in Malaysia despite their presence in the public sphere. For that reason, this research is significant as it aims to develop a profile of migrants' businesses based on opinions collected from Facebook (FB) comments on the locations of their businesses.

These businesses' ownership varies from sole ownership to family or non-family partnership (Mosbah et al., 2018). Migrants' businesses start-up conditions and motivations in Malaysia were discussed by Golam Hassan (2009) and Norehan Abdullah et al. (2012), where economic crises and job displacement motivate migrants to self-employment. They asserted that migrant workers shifted to entrepreneurship when they refused to be sent home after retrenchment or when their work contracts ended.

For this study, a migrant business is defined as a business conducted for profit and owned by temporary migrants in Malaysia. The comments posted are considered as public opinion towards migrant entrepreneurs, which provide rich information about their locations. The opinions posted by the members of the public were based on their encounters and experiences with migrants' businesses. Public opinion is defined as the collective opinions of functional groups in a society that are assessable to individuals, where the opinions may require responses and decisions from key individuals (Blumer, 1948). As such, the comments or opinions towards migrants' businesses require governance actions by the authorities as key individuals.

Theoretically, the location decision was made based on the location theory summarised by Gorter and Nijkamp (2001). The traditional location theory of Adam Smith believed that river basin areas were selected for population and business locations. This theory fits the location of Klang Valley as the heart of business activities in Malaysia. Furthermore, industrial firms were influenced by

minimising resource inputs and products outputs to be marketed (Weber, 1909). Von Thünen's Model of Agricultural Land Use (1842) explained the relationship of location decision in maximising profit by choosing the right product types and minimising transportation costs and rent. From the Economic Principles of Marshal (1920), on the other hand, focused on city economic activities due to spatial concentration and agglomeration that may result in city formation.

Differences in locations and types of products offered created a hierarchy and certain ranking that offered products of lower order (Gorter & Nijkamp, 2001). The focus of modern location theory later shifted to mobility, transportation costs and transaction costs (Krugman, 1991). Location accessibility through geographical clustering may increase local demand for products often observed in ethnic enclaves.

Hotspots of migrants' businesses can be beneficial to government agencies to improve their enforcement or preventive actions. It can mitigate problems related to the governance of migrants' businesses. This paper focuses on the geographic dimensions of migrants' business decisions by investigating the regularities of locations' decision through common patterns of individual migrant entrepreneurs based on social media users' comments on the locations of migrants' businesses. Comments were collected to identify and classify public perceptions of these businesses' locations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Randomly collecting public opinions from public Facebook comments posted on a public Facebook page should be considered a representation of public opinion. Facebook is a preferred social media platform in the country (Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), 2020). In 2020, Malaysians preferred online activity, evidenced by their participation in social networking (98%) with 91.7% utilising Facebook (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2021). Statistics also showed that 89.6% of Malaysians have internet access in 2020, 93.5% of the population in urban areas and 83.9% of the population in rural areas with access to the Internet (Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), 2020).

Developing countries are relying on migrant workers to fill the void in their labour shortages, mainly in 3D sectors (dirty, dangerous, and demeaning). As the country's economy flourishes, new jobs are created, but they are mostly low-skill, low-pay jobs that will attract temporary migrant workers and are not appealing to the locals (Hugo, 2011). Malaysia is no exception to this. By December 2020, there are 1,483,380 low-skill migrant workers in the country with active *Pas Lawatan*

Kerja Sementara (PLKS) or Visitor's Pass (Temporary Employment) (Fauzi Md Isa et al., 2021). Migrant workers are hired temporarily in Malaysia to take up jobs not liked by the locals but are needed to sustain the country's development, especially during the pandemic.

However, there are increasing concerns about the transformation of migrant workers to business owners, leaving their current jobs. While registrations of businesses are only allowed for citizens and permanent residents in Malaysia (Registration of Businesses Act 1956 [Act 197], 1978), non-citizens are allowed to register for private limited by shares companies with paid-up capital of at least RM500,000 (advisory/ consultant) and RM1,000,000 (import-export, restaurant and trading businesses) (Companies Commission of Malaysia Act 2001 [Act 614], 2018), which is under the purview of SSM.

Registration for businesses by locals' costs between RM30 – RM60, and it will not require any information on their capitals (Registration of Businesses Act 1956 [Act 197], 1978). Business registration is governed by city councils or municipal offices where the business premises are located. Ease of registration for businesses may create more opportunities, but there are chances of locals' registration being exploited to shadow non-Malaysian business owners (Ayadurai, 2011; Azizah Kassim, 2015a; Golam Hassan, 2009; Norehan Abdullah et al., 2012). Nayeem Sultana and Gerke (2008) pointed out an example of exploitation, such as Bangladeshi migrants' businesses conducted under local's spouse registration. However, some businesses have not registered their license (Muniandy, 2015a; Nayeem Sultana & Gerke, 2008).

Policies evaluation and authoritative administration on migrants' entrepreneurship through inter-marriage business ownership, sleep-partnership business owner, street vendor licenses rental and other company registration issues for migrant owners are explored to provide suggestions for possible policy direction. Most importantly, government authorities should understand the ecosystem of migrants' businesses, such as the products offered and business locations, so they may come up with a holistic solution to the issue.

Migrant Workers' Transformation into Entrepreneurs

Transformation to entrepreneurship is also an option for migrants' survival during economic crises, where some refuse to be sent home and stay as illegal migrants. These workers ventured into businesses to survive as migrants in the host country. This is evident from the establishment of more migrants' business start-ups, which were founded between 2002 and 2008 economic crises (Golam Hassan, 2009; Norehan Abdullah et al., 2012).

Despite the increase in migrant business start-ups during economic crises, Hung et al. (2011) found that economic crises may slow business operations in Malaysia and globally too (Jones et al., 2015; Kitching et al., 2009; Waldinger, McEvoy et al., 1990). However, Jones et al. (2015) claimed that ethnic businesses were unaffected during the economic downturn, which may have happened during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Migrant workers' intentions and entrepreneurs' behaviour will evolve over time from merely to survive as illegal workers during the economic crisis to entrepreneurs who were starting new businesses to maintaining or expanding their business operations and surviving in a competitive market. Past studies on migrants' businesses were mostly on migrants in the USA and UK; however, recently, more studies on migrants' businesses emerged in the EU and Australia (Ibrahim & Galt, 2011; Muniandy, 2015b). Most of these studies found that migrants are more likely to start an ethnic business of their origin and culture (Jones et al., 2015; Kitching et al., 2009; Riddle et al., 2010; Waldinger, Aldrich et al., 1990).

However, contrasting findings emerged regarding migrant businesses in Asian countries. Studies done on South Asian migrants' businesses in East Asia found that they venture into ethnic and local markets alike, some even expanded to the transnational level. Based on studies of Bangladeshi migrant entrepreneurs in Japan and Korea, most entrepreneurs selected both ethnic business niches, such as *halal* food restaurants and assimilation through local business too (Lian Kwen Fee & Md Mizanur Rahman, 2014; Md Mizanur Rahman & Lian Kwen Fee, 2011). These findings may give a rough idea that migrants' businesses are not concentrated in migrants' ethnic enclaves but reach wider areas populated by locals and migrants.

In the Western context, migrant's business was commonly viewed from non-economic factors such as social networks (Ibrahim & Galt, 2011), where strong kinship and a wide social network increase the probability of entry and success. The situation differs in Malaysia, where weak social ties with locals are more prominent for enterprise start-ups (Mosbah et al., 2018; Nayeem Sultana, 2008). Assimilation and partnership of migrants through marriage with locals were also discussed by Mosbah et al. (2018) and Sultana (2008), where Muslim male migrant workers (Indonesian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Arab or Muslim Indian) marry local Muslim women to gain citizenship, permanent residency or business licenses. The same findings were magnified in migrant businesses studies in Japan and Korea (see Lian Kwen Fee & Md Mizanur Rahman (2014); Md Mizanur Rahman & Lian Kwen Fee (2011). Assimilation through marriage with locals showed that migrants' businesses in Asia are not only targeting migrant consumers but gaining

access to the local market, too, thus breaking the ideation of ethnic enclaves' restrictions for migrants' businesses.

Another difference in Malaysia is that the businesses are not always enclosed in the ethnic enclave environment but dispersed in all areas, as compared to studies in ethnic enclaves in the UK where ethnic niche markets specifically targeted ethnic consumers, thus reducing their potential customers (Ibrahim & Galt, 2011). A study done by Muniandy (2015a) in Little Burma and Little Bangladesh ethnic enclaves in Kuala Lumpur found that Bangladeshi and Burmese migrants were not highly dependent on ethnic support and exclusivity due to the transnational nature of their businesses in those areas. Products of lower order are offered by shops in Little Burma, and Little Bangladesh as compared to Korean shops in Sri Hartamas showed how different locations created a hierarchy and ranking of products (Gorter & Nijkamp, 2001; Everett et al., 2015; Muniandy, 2015a).

METHODOLOGY

In this research, an observational study was conducted using ethnography to collect public comments from Facebook posts related to migrants' businesses in Malaysia. To have an in-depth understanding on migrants' businesses, a qualitative approach from a single case study during a bounded time setting is suitable to understand the themes or explanations of the said topic (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The 12-step netnography process by Kozinets (2015) was applied to collect and analyse data for this research. Those are as follows: introspection, investigation, information, interview, inspection, interaction, immersion, indexing, interpretation, iteration, instantiation, and integration.

Comments collected from the netnography study were then analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) 6-step thematic analysis. These involve the following: data familiarisation, initial code generation, theme searching, theme review, theme definition and naming and report production. Thematic analysis was undertaken to identify migrants' businesses and create a map of migrants' entrepreneurs from the data collected on the social media environment. The data were observed, collected, and searched for business location's themes of repeated comments on migrant business's locations, cities, districts and states in Malaysia.

Research Scope
The scope of this research is set during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Selected Facebook postings on migrants' businesses were carefully observed, filtered and selected. These postings were posted between 25 January 2020 and 31

December 2020, when the first case of COVID-19 was detected on 25 January 2020 from three Chinese nationals travelling from Wuhan who entered Malaysia through Johor Bahru (Abdullah, 2020).

This research focuses on the geographical locations of migrants' businesses nationwide, especially in the Klang Valley. The findings may discover hotspot locations, the relationship between accessibility, infrastructure, and the effects of urbanisation on ethnic enclaves in their decisions regarding residential and business locations. The concepts in Location Theory (Gorter & Nijkamp, 2001) were used to analyse findings that mapped the locations collected from the comments compared to downloaded data from ArcGis Web Map in Klang Valley (Moore, 2024).

Data Collection

The data for this research are comments collected from pre-determined Facebook pages of law enforcement agencies and local authorities (*pihak berkuasa tempatan, PBT)* in the Klang Valley on a specific topic: migrants' businesses. They were selected because these agencies govern migrants and the registration of small businesses. Only publicly posted comments in these postings were selected as samples. Nine (9) city councils in the Klang Valley (Jabatan Wilayah Persekutuan, 2009) were identified, and all of these agencies have their own official Facebook page.

However, only six were selected because another three PBTs have only one posting on enforcement action towards migrant entrepreneurs throughout the year 2020. The PBTs are *Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur (DBKL)* (Kuala Lumpur City Hall), *Majlis Bandaraya Shah Alam (MBSA)* (Shah Alam City Council), *Majlis Bandaraya Petaling Jaya (MBPJ)* (Petaling Jaya City Council), *Majlis Perbandaran Selayang (MPS)* (Selayang Municipal Council), *Majlis Perbandaran Klang (MPK)* (Klang Municipal Council) and *Majlis Perbandaran Kajang (MPKj)* (Kajang Municipal Council).

A total of 57,404 comments from 218 Facebook postings were read and re-read to code and analyse the comments, which contained locations of migrants' businesses. The locations can be states, districts, cities, or places such as shopping malls or wet markets. The comments were coded by using Atlas.ti into 65 codes that will be elaborated in the discussion.

Data Analysis

After the familiarisation process, a rough idea of the keywords for the codes from repeated occurrences are detected. The codes are the main ingredients of the themes in a thematic analysis. If the codes are not identified precisely, the

constructed themes may lose context due to too much generalisation, and the analysis may lose its depth and breadth. For the analysis to answer the research questions, the coded comments mention the locations and help in profiling migrants' businesses.

The locality is divided into three other sub-themes: i) 'States', ii) 'Districts', and iii) 'Places'. As Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested, sub-themes can be used to create structure or hierarchy within the data. The identifications of themes and sub-themes resulted from the refinement process of initial themes and sub-themes. The codes evolved into more specific codes on migrants businesses' localities, such as districts in Klang Valley, states in Malaysia and specific places which are commonly identified with migrants' businesses.

The number of comments that mentioned specific cities and districts were recorded and mapped into ArcGIS base map. The data are mapped according to the number of quotations that mentioned the cities and districts to identify the distribution and concentration of migrant' businesses in Klang Valley. The longitude and latitude of the cities were mapped, and ArcGIS's standard deviations analysis tool was used to understand the dispersion of the locations of migrants' enterprises in Klang Valley. More concentrated areas are weighted by the number of quotations represented by the darker shades of ellipses. OpenStreetMap (OSM) data of shops in Asia, updated every five minutes with the latest edits, are mapped in the ArcGIS Web Map with shops tag (Moore, 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Spatial differences are often used to explain social studies. Locations of migrants' businesses are coded to know more about the trends. There are 65 codes for locations, where 12 codes are states, 39 are districts, and 14 are places. The codes for locations are specific to the names of states, districts, and places. There are only 12 states instead of 14 in the list for states because it does not include Selangor and the Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya, as they are in Klang Valley.

However, it is important to mention that there is no code for the Federal Territory of Labuan because no comment mentioned migrants' businesses in Labuan. The observed data are summarised in Table 2. The number of quotations for each code is displayed in parentheses.

Locations of Migrants' Businesses
The specific places mentioned in the comments are coded into 14 codes. These places can be residential or business areas commonly associated with migrants' presence. However, generalisation for locations of migrants' businesses such as

pasar malam (night market), *pasar basah* (wet market), shopping malls, and restaurants are not included, and the locations are coded in the speciality theme. For motorcycle/ lorry/ car/ door-to-door code, it is used when the comments mentioned that the businesses are conducted from their home, car, van, lorry, or motorcycle.

States Locations of Migrant Entrepreneurship in Malaysia

Specifically, 36 codes for the districts or cities and 14 places in the Klang Valley were coded in the comments. A total of 5,600 quotations were coded for locations in the Klang Valley. The codes for districts, cities, and places are only those in the Klang Valley because the PBTs selected for this research are in the area. However, it was observed that other states were also mentioned in the comments even when it was posted on the Facebook pages of PBTs in the Klang Valley or on the Facebook pages of law enforcement agencies. The number of comments for the state's locations is illustrated in Figure 1.
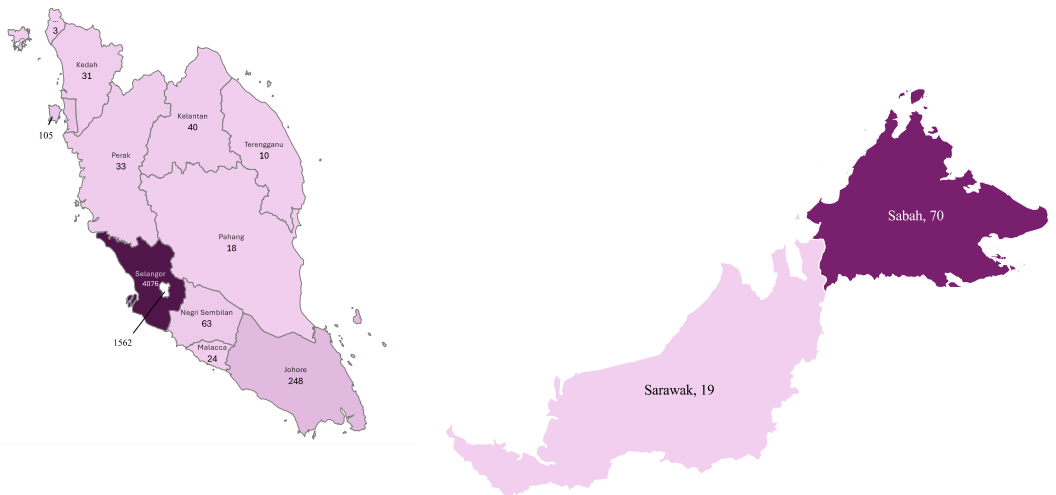

Figure 1: Number of Facebook Comments Coded for Migrants' Businesses Locations in Malaysia

Table 1: Locations of Migrants' Businesses Coded from Facebook Comments

LOCATIONS OF BUSINESSES				
STATES (12)	**DISTRICTS/ CITIES (39)**			**PLACES (14)**
Johor (248)	Klang (734)	Setapak (87)	Serdang/ Seri Kembangan (33)	Chow Kit (130)
Penang (105)	Shah Alam (621)	Pantai Dalam (85)	Batu Caves (26)	Kg Melayu Subang (82)
Sabah (70)	Sungai Buloh (602)	Sentul (84)	Brickfields (24)	Petaling Street (70)
Kelantan (40)	Kajang/ Semenyih/ Bangi (466)	Langat (78)	Setiawangsa (20)	Kotaraya (64)
Perak (33)	Selayang (402)	Rawang (76)	Sepang (16)	Kenanga (51)
Kedah (31)	Balakong/ Cheras (362)	Wangsa Maju (70)	Sunway (15)	Jalan Silang (50)
Negeri Sembilan (26)	Gombak (129)	Kepong (62)	Klang Lama/ Sri Petaling (14)	Masjid Jamek/ Masjid India (45)
Melaka (24)	Bukit Bintang (120)	Pandan (54)	Banting (12)	Jalan Ipoh (37)
Sarawak (19)	Subang (119)	Puchong (50)	Cameron Highlands (9)	Jalan TAR (37)
Pahang (18)	Ampang (113)	Petaling Jaya (48)	Hartamas (9)	Pasar Borong Selangor (36)
Terengganu (10)	Sungai Besi (103)	Damansara (44)	Bukit Jalil (6)	Kg Baru (34)
Perlis (3)	Pudu (100)	Segambut (43)	Sabak Bernam (5)	Times Square (30)
	Keramat (89)	Nilai (37)	Cyberjaya (4)	Central Market (11)
				South City Plaza (3)

There was no comment coded for Labuan and Putrajaya. Putrajaya is the administrative capital of Malaysia, and it houses all the headquarters of ministries and government agencies. Putrajaya was mentioned in the comments to show relativity because there were locations of migrants' businesses where enforcement agencies near Putrajaya took no action.

To further analyse the states' locations in Malaysia, the data are grouped into two (2) types, which are:

a) North and South Metropolitan Centres
b) International Bordering States

North and South Metropolitan Centres

In neo-classical location theory, Adam Smith identified that areas around the river and delta basins developed into high concentrations of population and business (Gorter & Nijkamp, 2001). Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Johor and Penang, which used to be the centre of economic and trading activities during the colonial era, were located along rivers and sea straits. Development of these states progressed as the economy evolved over the years through mining and agriculture, followed by modern industries. Klang Valley has experienced various developments in public facilities following its high concentration of population and businesses that can benefit many.

Besides the states in Klang Valley, Johor has the highest number of quotations. For locations code of states, 248 quotations out of 627 mentioned Johor in the comment (39.55%), while another 105 quotations (16.75%) mentioned Penang. Johor is in the southernmost of Peninsular Malaysia, neighbouring to Singapore. It has high economic and industrial activities. A port in Pasir Gudang served as an import-export hub for Malaysia and its neighbouring countries. Its port location is an important factor in the success of heavy industries in Johor. Besides that, Penang also plays an important role in heavy industry, and Penang Port is one of the important ports for import and export of goods. The ease of transporting goods from these ports may minimise product input and maximise product output (Krugman, 1991; Weber, 1909). With many economic activities, these areas provide numerous job opportunities for migrant workers.

Many factories offer employment to migrant workers in Johor. Seven ferry terminals in Johor cater to passengers from Indonesia entering the country. Johor is one of the important hubs for migrant workers entering Malaysia. Its location is near Indonesia and accessible by sea transportation, which has attracted many Indonesian migrants. Another example is Melaka; even with its proximity to Indonesia, which is within two two-hour ferry ride, Melaka has only 24 quotations

of reporting on migrants' businesses, revealing that the locals still run most businesses in Melaka as compared to migrants.

Public may feel uncomfortable with the presence of migrants' businesses at their locations. Some of the observed comments showed negative reactions towards migrants. Some examples are as follows:

> "UserYO, right, bro. The problem is that there are too many migrants. It made me sick to the stomach (nak naik muntah). Please monitor them."

> "Well done, MPS. Hope there's hard work everywhere else. Semak (irritated) to see migrants take over local's economy."

Therefore, an increased number of migrants may increase number of migrants' businesses (Nur Suhaili Binti Ramli, 2020). The increased presence of migrants in the community led to more mentions of migrants' businesses in FB comment sections.

International Bordering States

Many migrants are concentrated in big cities. The codes Klang Valley, Johor, and Penang are recorded as the top three locations mentioned in the comments. These main cities are distributed in North, Central and South Peninsular Malaysia, with high economic and industrial activities that can offer employment opportunities to locals and migrants alike. Penang, like Johor, is a heavy industry state with a deep-water port for import and export activities. Job opportunities in factories, ports, and commercial areas attracted many migrant workers. Besides that, migrants' businesses are blessed with a bigger pool of workers to work for their enterprises reducing resource input that influences locations' selections of their businesses (C. Gorter & P. Nijkamp, 2001). Penang is located near Medan, Indonesia, where a 50-minute flight will take one to Malaysia. However, based on preceding discussions, proximity and bordering locations may not affect the number of occurrences of the locations in the comments.

Another 70 quotations were recorded in Sabah, an East Malaysian state located in Borneo. Sabah shares its wide maritime borders with Indonesia and the Philippines, and its land borders are with Indonesia. Half of the workforce in Sabah are migrant workers, most of whom were political refugees in the 1970s (Kanapathy, 2008). AKM Ahsan Ullah (2013) claimed that Malaysian authorities' actions are actually encouraging illegal migrants from Indonesia and the Philippines to enter Sabah. Migrants from Indonesia and the Philippines tend to bring their families together to Sabah (Kanapathy, 2006; Sayed Mahadi et al., 2019),

and children of refugees who were born in Sabah are stateless children. Their long-term emigration to Sabah and their family settling down in the country may have enabled them to participate in business activities.

Refugees and other illegal immigrants who entered by land or sea into Sabah may explain the high number of mentions of migrants' businesses in Sabah. While Sabah has a high influx of migrants because of its geographic location, Kedah, Kelantan, Perlis, Perak and Sarawak, which also share their land border with neighbouring countries, have fewer quotations. The evident differences between Sabah and these other states may explain why the high number of migrants' businesses may not be related to proximity to neighbouring countries but more to its' unique migration pattern in Sabah.

Districts and Cities Locations

Locations of migrants' businesses are usually restricted to ethnic enclaves to cater to ethnic customers, like in the United Kingdom, Europe, or the United States (Ibrahim & Galt, 2011; Waldinger, Aldrich et al., 1990). Economic activities are more concentrated in big cities (Acs & Armington, 2004), and a study by Del Carpio et al. (2015) found that besides economic activities, more low-skill job opportunities are available in big cities, which attracts more migrant workers to the locations like in Klang Valley. Location theory also identified agglomeration economies as important for city formations (Gorter & Nijkamp, 2001).

The top seven codes of districts which were mentioned are located in Selangor, which are Klang, Shah Alam, Sungai Buloh, Kajang/ Semenyih/ Bangi, Selayang, Balakong/ Cheras and Gombak that are represented in the ellipses in Figure 2. The locations of shops in the Klang Valley data from ArcGIS map are labelled as shop tags. It is an obvious conclusion that most migrants' businesses are commonly observed by social media commenters as located in Selangor, and the area is not concentrated in a district or city centre but spreads out to suburban areas.

Residential Areas

Locations of migrants' businesses are dispersed all over the Klang Valley from the centre of Kuala Lumpur to the outskirts of the Klang Valley. Nayeem Sultana (2008) finds that there were no specific locations that can be said to be hotspots for Bangladeshi migrants but selected Bangi/ Kajang, Port Klang, Bandar Sunway, Subang Mewah, Subang Jaya and Kotaraya as her research areas. Migrants may reside in the outskirts because renting a house in these areas is cheaper than in the city centre.
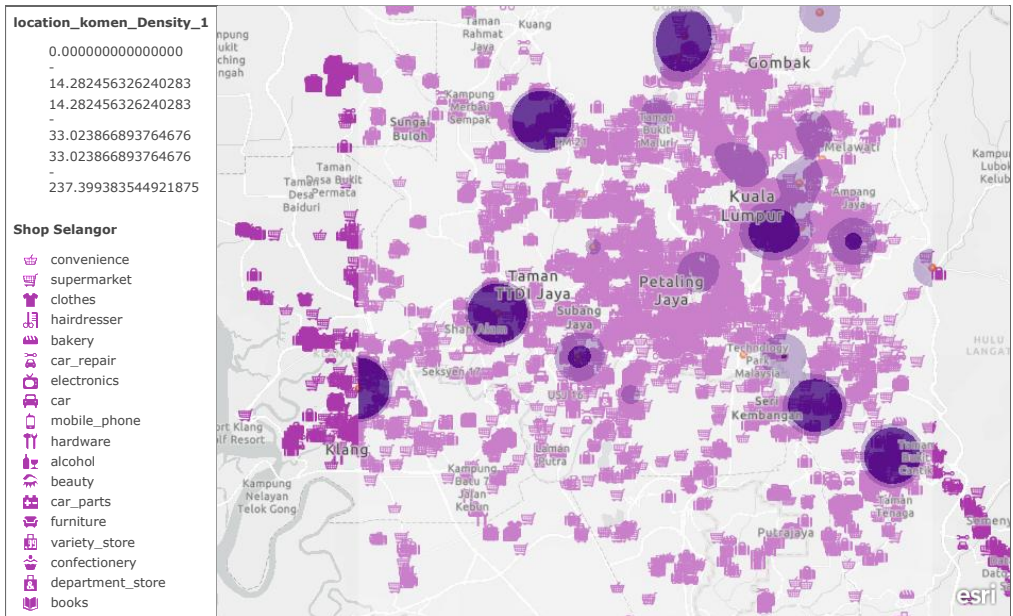
Figure 1: Mapping of Migrants' Businesses Locations in Klang Valley

In the 1970s, higher migration to the city increased housing demand and property prices. Other districts that were mentioned also had a history of squatter settlements. Some examples are Kampung Muhibbah in Sungai Besi, Kampung Pandan, Kampung Baru, Keramat, Kampung Melayu Subang and Pantai Dalam (Sufian & Mohamad, 2009). Based on the comments, there were also migrants' businesses reported in residential areas in Klang Valley, such as Kajang/ Semenyih/ Bangi, Gombak, Subang, Ampang, Sungai Besi, Keramat, Setapak, Pantai, Sentul, Rawang, Wangsa Maju, Kepong, Pandan, Puchong, Petaling Jaya, Damansara, Segambut and Serdang/ Seri Kembangan.

Decisions on residential location in the vicinity of economic activities are a common pattern due to limited transportation options and limited financial sources (Gorter & Nijkamp, 2001). Over time, residential decisions shifted further off the centre. Even with higher transportation costs, housing costs were reduced due to land value. Migrants settled in government or privately owned lands as squatters to cut down on their living expenses (Samion & Awang, 2017; Sufian & Mohamad, 2009). Those areas were mostly located on the outskirts of the city centre and had limited electricity and clean water facilities.

In the 2000s, the government introduced a new policy, *Dasar Setinggan Sifar* (Zero Squatters Policy), to eradicate squatter settlement issues. New Villages were created or resettlements in *Projek Perumahan Rakyat* (People Housing

Programs) were implemented to solve this issue. Samion and Awang (2017), in their research on the suburban housing community in Hulu Lang, found that the majority of people living in Hulu Langat Districts were migrants who worked in the nearby areas. During their research, Kajang and Semenyih were divisions in Hulu Langat District.

Therefore, after more than 30 years, migrants who used to live in Kajang and Semenyih may have settled in the areas that can explain why there are unusually high numbers of quotations for Kajang/ Bangi/ Semenyih. Besides that, government initiatives to ensure a house for each family may have backlashed when low-cost apartments were rented out to migrants after they upgraded to better homes. As reported in 2013, Petaling has the highest number of low-cost and affordable housing; low-cost and affordable housing were also built in Klang, Hulu Langat, Gombak and Sepang (State Government of Selangor, 2012).

The program continued with more housing projects in other locations, too. Since the late 1990s, as housing developments created more housing options for migrants, the spread of residential areas to the suburban areas can explain the high number of quotations for districts such as Sentul, Rawang, Wangsa Maju, Kepong, Pandan, Puchong, Petaling Jaya, Damansara, Segambut and Serdang/ Seri Kembangan.

Ironically, many migrant workers are provided with poor housing and living conditions by their employers even though they were the ones who helped the construction of multi-million-ringgit worth of buildings and houses. During the COVID-19 breakout in Malaysia, the poor living conditions of migrants were disclosed to the public in the news. Their communal housings were packed and unhygienic which increased COVID-19 infections among migrants (Razlan et al., 2023).

Migrant workers are still at a loss when issues on their housing facilities and welfare are discussed, even though the National Housing Policy is revised every five years and Employees' Minimum Standards of Housing, Accommodations and Amenities Act 1990 was set to ensure both local and migrant employees deserve a liveable housing facility that should not endanger their health and safety. Migrants' decisions to set up their businesses in residential areas off the city centre can be due to wanting to reduce transportation and rental costs, at the same time targeting residents in the area as their clientele.

Industrial Areas

Port Klang is a very important port for importing and exporting goods in Malaysia. It is the second-largest seaport in ASEAN (State Government of Selangor, 2020), and the 12th largest container port globally (Invest Selangor

Berhad, 2020). Port Klang is also a transportation hub for sea entry into Malaysia. Klang, Shah Alam and Sungai Buloh are some of the highly industrialised areas in Selangor *(Kawasan Perindustrian di Selangor, 2016)*. These three districts share a common trait: as the centre for small, medium, and heavy industrial activities.

The manufacturing industry in Malaysia relies highly on migrant workers, and the highest number of migrant workers are employed in this sector, with 699,430 active workers in the year 2020 (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2019). Therefore, it provides insights that explain why most comments about migrants' businesses were observed in Klang, Shah Alam, and Sungai Buloh. Besides that, some industries, such as rubber gloves, were allowed to operate during the pandemic despite the country being under lockdown. Industrial and economic activities in the area were running as usual.

Concentrations of migrant workers in certain areas may increase the number of migrants' enterprises and lead to more of their presence and appearance within the public. Many of these migrants may reside in the areas close to their workplaces (Gorter & Nijkamp, 2001), and more migrants' businesses may be opened in these areas to cater to fellow migrants and other industrial workers. As mentioned in location theory, spatial hierarchy created the demand for goods with a lower order (Gorter & Nijkamp, 2001). From the research findings in the Western environment, Kitching et al. (2009) and Waldinger, Aldrich et al. (1990), agreed that ethnic enterprises are focusing on ethnic products and services, targeting the same ethnicity.

Commercial Areas

The highest quotation for a specific place in Kuala Lumpur is for Chow Kit, followed by Bukit Bintang, Sungai Besi, and Pudu. Although Chow Kit is not a district, the comments may include the nearby areas and not just a specific building or place such as the Chow Kit morning market. The second highest mention for a place is Kampung Melayu Subang, a village/ residential area with some light industrial premises in Sungai Buloh, Selangor, followed by Petaling Street, Kotaraya and Kenanga Wholesale City.

Migrants' businesses may succeed better in their enclaves with the support of customers from their countrymen (Md Mizanur Rahman & Lian Kwen Fee, 2011), but migrants' businesses in Malaysia cater to both migrants and locals' market (Bunmak, 2013; Golam Hassan, 2009; Mosbah et al., 2018; Muniandy, 2015a). Several locations were spotted as migrants' enclaves in Klang Valley. Those locations are Chow Kit, Bukit Bintang, Pudu, Kampung Melayu Subang, Petaling Street, Kotaraya, Kenanga Wholesale Center, Jalan Silang and Masjid Jamek/ Masjid India.

These locations are in the heart of Kuala Lumpur, which is at the centre of commercial activities. Although there is a higher number of shops in Petaling Jaya as illustrated in Figure 2, more comments mentioned other cities and districts as hot spots for migrants' businesses. It showed that more economic activities are not the only attraction for migrants' business locations, maybe due to more business competition.

Some of the entrepreneurs started as workers to local business owners before starting their businesses because local owners are not interested in running their businesses in the areas where migrants reside due to market shift (Muniandy, 2015b, 2015a), and it is especially true in areas which are commonly known as Little Burma and Little Bangla. These areas are near Pudu, Kotaraya shopping mall and Jalan Silang.

Indonesian and Aceh traders can be seen in the Chow Kit area, informally known as Mini Jakarta. They started as petty traders that later evolved and grew (Golam Hassan, 2009). Shops opened by migrants sell products sourced locally and from their country of origin that can attract Malaysians and non-Malaysian buyers. Migrants spend their off-day shopping at these locations and get to socialise by meeting friends from their own countries.

Another commercial location is a wholesale hub for clothing and home furnishing, Kenanga Wholesale Centre, located in Jalan Hang Tuah just behind Jalan Imbi in the Pudu area. Users posted their comments on the nationalities of migrants operating businesses on the premises, which may imply that Bangladeshis dominated the business at the location. Kenanga Wholesale City is a shopping mall which has shops selling clothing and shoes in bulk for consumer retail, resellers, or smaller shops.

The wet market is one of the locations that usually employed migrants, although local councils prohibited the employment of migrant workers in markets. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been a few cluster outbreaks in wet market areas, which started from *Kluster Pasar Borong Kuala Lumpur* (Kuala Lumpur Wholesale Market Cluster) in April 2020 (Liza Mokhtar, 2020). As the news hit the public during MCO, migrants' businesses operating in Pasar Borong Kuala Lumpur received quite a stir from the public and demanded actions by the authorities. Migrants living nearby were screened for COVID-19, and the area was under the Enhanced Movement Control Order or EMCO (Razlan et al., 2023).

The public responded to the issues through JIM FB posts. The spread has affected nearby areas such as Selayang. There were several comments by the public reporting on migrants' businesses in Selayang. Selayang is commonly known as the location of the Rohingya settlement in Klang Valley, and migrants' traders are

typically seen selling goods in the wet market. Another wet market, Pasar Borong Selangor, which is in Seri Kembangan, also received numerous comments.

Other locations that were mentioned less than 10 times are Sri Hartamas (9), Bukit Jalil (6), Cyberjaya (4) and South City Plaza (3). Locations outside of Klang Valley but in Selangor are Banting (12), Ulu Langat (78) and Sabak Bernam (5). These districts are located on the city's outskirts and have limited migrant job opportunities. Migrants' businesses were also reported in these districts as well as in other states, which provides some clues that migrants may have moved out of the city to the villages and small towns to seek business opportunities.

Locations Outside of Klang Valley

Nilai and Cameron Highlands are two locations outside Klang Valley that were coded due to their frequent repetition. Nilai is located in Negeri Sembilan, a medium-industrial zone famous for its textile and home furnishing centre. Perak, bordering north of Klang Valley, has only 33 quotations, possibly due to its reduced economic activities and time spent commuting between these two locations.

Perak is the second largest state in Peninsular Malaysia, and it spans through the Titiwangsa Range to Penang, located in the north of Malaysia. Compared to Nilai, which is a smaller district and easily connected to Klang Valley via highways and public transportation such as KTM commuter, many opted to reside in Nilai while working in the Klang Valley.

Cameron Highlands is a holiday and agriculture destination in Pahang. Pahang is the largest state in Peninsular Malaysia, and there are fewer quotation codes for Pahang. Migrant workers are usually employed at vegetable farms and hotels in Cameron Highlands. The presence of migrant workers in such a remote area as Cameron Highlands may open opportunities for migrants to run businesses, catering to their countrymen in the area.

Therefore, migrants' businesses in Malaysia are not concentrated in their own ethnic enclaves, such as in the West, but they are more widespread if there are demands from the market and opportunities to start a business emerge. Good infrastructures, capital availability, and business facilities through the development of commercial areas created more opportunities for new businesses.

CONCLUSION

This research managed to profile migrants' businesses in Malaysia, focusing on the locality of migrants' businesses from observation of comments on Facebook. It presented findings based on the analysis of Facebook posts and comments,

showcasing the types of businesses migrants are involved in and their nationalities. It extensively profiles migrant businesses by examining their geographical distribution. The Klang Valley emerges as a significant hub for migrants' businesses, particularly in districts like Klang, Shah Alam, and Sungai Buloh, while other states like Johor, Penang, and Sabah also exhibit notable migrants' entrepreneurship.

Although location theory focuses on maximising profits through minimising transportation costs, rent and transaction costs, migrants' businesses minimised their costs by establishing their premises nearer to their target market in residential and industrial areas. These areas, often located on the outskirts of the city centre, offered lower rent, thus minimising their costs. Location theory also emphasised that location decisions were not random but appeared in a visible pattern or cluster. This research identified that businesses are clustered in the sub-urban areas in the Klang Valley compared to the city centre of Kuala Lumpur.

This research also introduced a brief idea on the economic and social complexities of migrants' businesses, shedding light on mixed local perceptions ranging from competition to concerns about recognising migrants' financial contributions. It offers a comprehensive view of locations for enforcement actions by PBTs and JIM. This analysis paves the way for a deeper understanding of the intricate dynamics at play within Malaysia's business landscape and the governance of migrants. Further study should be conducted to understand the limitations faced by PBTs in monitoring and controlling migrants' businesses, especially regarding the demarcation and boundary issues between PBTs.

The information provided in the comments can be beneficial to government agencies in improving their enforcement or taking preventive actions to mitigate problems related to migrants' businesses if the comments are monitored and read carefully. For example, immigration officers may conduct a thorough screening at the border for certain nationals reported or mentioned repetitively in the comments to ensure that they have valid passes/ visas to enter the country. PBTs may increase control and monitoring in the areas which were repeatedly mentioned in the comments.

Facebook comments that mentioned migrants' businesses were coded and thematically analysed according to the states in Malaysia. This research also uses ArcGIS to map out the locations of migrant businesses in the Klang Valley. It may contribute to developing a potential national database and create a national overview of migrants' business locations and the hotspots for better monitoring by the authorities.

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