

Signal of Crimes: Worries Over Foreign Immigrant's Threats

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Abstract--This study was aimed at identifying the criminal worries among respondents towards foreign immigrants, which acted as a of criminal occurrence. It also examined the relationship between foreign immigrants and criminal worries. The data collection involved 400 respondents in Penang, Malaysia. A questionnaire was utilized as the instrument of the study. The findings are divided into three sections: i) the perceptions of the respondents to criminal worry involving foreign immigrants, ii) the mean difference of socio-demographic factors with foreign immigrants by t-test and ANOVAs iii) the relationship between the aspect of foreign immigrants and criminal worries. The results of study are presented using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study suggests some significant practical actions that need to be undertaken to control and monitor the foreign immigrantin Malaysia.

Key words--signal of crime, criminal worries, foreign immigrants, public safety

I. INTRODUCTION

Migration refers to the human migration beyond a boundary, and is divided into two types, namely internal migration and international migration. Human migration from one region to another to meet their needs has become a trend since the onset of human civilization. At the beginning of civilization, people moved to find the basic necessities such as food, shelter and suitable place to perform economic activities. Today, the international migration occurs due to not only people's sake for their basic needs but also other pushing factors such as war in the country of origin, poverty and lack of basic facilities for health and education.

According to Dollah and colleagues (2003), migrants are referred to foreigners who enter a country in the wrong way while not having legal documents or having false travel documents, stay within a specified period of time and do not report their presence to certain bodies in the recipient country. The concept of public safety is seen as an important element when it involves the foreigner.

The public safety has a huge dimension in society and has a spectrum of worries that can cause diverse conflicts. In the aspect of foreign immigrants, the community has a sense of awareness towards security, social problems and so on. According to Rusniah and colleagues (2014), the issue of foreign immigrants is one of the elements of security threats that should be given an attention after the Cold War. International migration could affect the international security when uncontrolled influx of foreigners jeopardizes various forms of new security such as human rights, ethnics, social and cultural conflicts, demographics, economics and so on. Section 55E(7) of the

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Malaysia's Immigration Act 1959/63 provides that the illegal immigrant (PATI) is any person, other than a citizen, who violates Sections 5, 6, 8, 9 and 15 of the Act or Regulation 39 of the Immigration Regulations 1963. Therefore, the presence of PATI is included in the meaning of threat to national security which should be considered seriously (Rusniah *et. al*, 2014).

Therefore, the main purposes of this study are to identify the perceptions of criminal worries among respondents towards foreign immigrants and to examine the relationship between foreign immigrants and criminal worries. The study finding would help the policymakers and government agencies to design an approach which possibly becomes a regulatory mechanism in the context of public safety for controlling or preventing the foreigners' commission of crimes.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Uncontrolled number of immigrants causes various forms of security threats to national security. According to Scot Wortley (2009), the *importation model* focuses explicitly on the relationship between migration and crime. It assumes that some individuals decide to migrate with a clear goal to engage in criminal activities in the countries they migrate. This model is often used to describe the presence of international criminal syndicates. Criminal groups and terrorist organizations often engage in various forms of illegal activities including drug trafficking, fraud, human trafficking, theft, smuggling, extortion, house breaking, prostitution and violence. This model explains that immigrants intend to do anything for their life survival when they decide to migrate. Based on this importation model, the policy responses to the immigrants' entry must include improved refugee checks, detection of international criminals through collaboration with international police agencies, restrictions of immigrants from a 'high-risk crime' countries, and a quick removal of convicted criminal immigrants. Obviously, the importation model emerges as an important guiding tool for guide policy makers to adopt appropriate approaches towards securing the local community's safety. Liow (2007) articulates that the presence of PATI continuously evolves and poses the threat to national security. The threat to security is not limited to criminal aspects, but the presence of PATI has an impact on the quality of life, society, culture, health, politics, economics and others. Former Deputy Minister in Malaysian Ministry of Home Affairs, Chor Chee Heung, has raised in the Parliament the issues and impacts of the influx of foreign workers, especially from Indonesia on national security. He considered that although their presence is still under control, the government should pay serious attention to the issue of PATI as this can jeopardize national security (see Rusniah *et. al*, 2014).

From the legal point of view, Malaysia has the relevant provisions of the law to facilitate the authorities' law enforcement. According to Rusniah and others (2014), a non-citizen may be arrested or detained under the Immigration Act 1959/63 (Act 155) and may be detained for a term of up to 14 days before being brought to a Magistrate. The Magistrate will then issue an order for him to be held for a period of time as long as required by an immigration officer or police officer for the purpose of investigating offenses under the Act or by an immigration officer to make inquiry or remove the person elsewhere (Paragraph 51(5)(b)).

Generally, the inflow of foreigners has created a relatively long duration of stay in the country. Whether they enter legally or not, most of the immigrants have the goal of upgrading their economic status. They crave for better job opportunities with profitable salary as compared to salary rates in their country. Threats among them exist when they do not get a job or they are too desirous to earn money quickly or abundantly. This situation encourages them to commit offences or crimes that contravene the laws of the state.

Wan Shawaluddin and Ramli Dollah (2008) argue that the rapid economic growth in Malaysia substantiated by the economic transition from agricultural sector to industry has resulted in the influx of foreign workers in this country. Previously, foreign workers only focused on the agricultural sector but currently they have transferred to other sectors including the tourism and manufacturing sectors. Even foreign workers also dominate jobs that are supposed to be filled by local workers such as in the fields of nutrition and safety. The arrival of foreign workers however, potentially leads to a rise in crime rates in the country. Home breaking, theft, rape, riot and others might occur if there is no control and monitoring undertaken by the government. As a result, there appear various problems which impact upon the public safety and national development. The country would face variant physical and social problems arising from the uncontrolled influx of immigrants.

According to Jami'ah Shukri (2010), foreign workers are still crucial for the smooth operations of construction, manufacture, services and maid sectors. The country's dependence on foreign workers until February 2010, in various sectors was estimated at 1.8 million people. Overall, 26.1 million foreigners entering the country including travelers, workers, diplomats, short-term workers, residents, students and cardholders of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Of these, 2.4 million stay for a long term. The presence of foreigners whether for working or for traveling, has given positive and negative implications to Malaysia.

Thus, a large number of immigrants still illegally stay and work in Malaysia, thereby causing worries among locals as well as constituting threats and burdens to the country. They are also linked with economic and human rights issues if the government acts arbitrarily towards them. Clearly, the influx of foreign workers can bring negative implications to the country including security threats, economic burdens and human rights violations. Thus, the Cabinet Committee on Foreign Workers and Illegal Immigrants, chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, on 22 February 2010 decided to set up a Foreign Resident Management Laboratory in Malaysia, particularly to avoid dumping illegal immigrants.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study was replicated from a doctorate dissertation titled "Worry of Crime in Public Safety Context in Malaysia: A Case Study in Penang", and this study focuses on the criminal worry towards foreign immigrant threats in Penang, Malaysia, which acted as a signal of criminal occurrence. The selection of Penang as the study area was due to the increasing rate of crime index reported each year in this state.

This study used a sample set of questionnaire for data collection involving 400 respondents in five districts in Penang; Northeast Penang Island, Southwest Penang Island, North Seberang Perai, Central Seberang Perai and South Seberang Perai. Based on the recommendations of Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the minimum sample size for a

population of over one million is 384 subjects (in Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). Therefore, taking into account the districts chosen and the drop-out rate in this study, 400 respondents were selected to represent the population of the study. The sample size selection for each district is calculated based on the ratio of the population by districts to the entire population in Penang (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1: Number of Respondents by Penang Districts in Year 2015

District	Population ('000)	Required sample size
Northeast Penang	535.2	129
Southwest Penang	217.6	52
Central Seberang Perai	310.7	75
North Seberang Perai	395.1	95
South Seberang Perai	204.4	49
Total	1663.0	400

Source: Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2015

A set of questionnaire used was divided into two sections of closed-ended and open-ended questions. These questions have been tested for validity and reliability in order to ensure that the findings are reliable and not questioned (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). The reported Cronbach's Alpha (α) was 0.966, which indicates that the items are highly-reliable and positively correlated to one another.

The sampling method used in this study was systematic random sampling. The samples of the study population were selected according to the five districts in Penang. It is basically based on the intervals in the number of houses being surveyed until the total samples required for this study are sufficient. The usage of this sampling method was considered easy and cost-saving, once the sampling frame is determined (Mohd Majid Konting, 2005).

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to present the results obtained. The perception of respondents to criminal worry involving foreign immigrants was analysed by percentage and mean. Independent t-test was tested on gender and ANOVA was tested on other demographic factors such as ethnicity, marital status, occupation, education level, monthly income and number of children against the aspect of foreign immigrants. If the ANOVA test showed significant differences, post-hoc test was then analyzed to determine which comparison groups were significant. Moreover, correlation analysis was applied to test the relationship between foreign immigrants and the level of criminal worries among communities in Penang.

IV. STUDY FINDINGS

The findings are summarized into three sections: i) the perceptions of the respondents to criminal worry involving foreign immigrants; ii) the mean difference of socio-demographic factors with foreign immigrants by t-

test and ANOVA; and iii) the relationship between the aspect of foreign immigrants and criminal worries. The findings are discussed in the next section.

4.1 The perceptions of the respondents to criminal worry involving foreign immigrants

Foreign immigrants could be categorized into two group. The first group consists of those who enter the country by permission or in compliance with the immigration requirements while the second group comprise those who enter the country illegally or not in accordance with the requirements of immigration, either through unauthorized entrance, by smuggling and so forth.

Table 1.2 shows that 298 (74.5%) respondents were worried about the presence of foreigners in their housing areas. While 279 (69.8%) respondents were concerned about the existing regulations, which seemingly give the immigrants the maximum freedom to be anywhere at any time. There should be a dynamic approach in controlling them from moving freely in order to ensure the safety and well-being of the community.

It is notable that some criminal offenders are foreign immigrants. They should aware that their priority of migrating to this country is to generate income and help their families. According to the surveys, 322 (80.5%) respondents were worried about the increase in violent crimes committed by these migrants. In terms of property crimes, 315 (78.8%) respondents were worried with the increase of property crimes by foreigners. There should be an approach that can be a regulatory mechanism in the context of public safety so that the government agencies are able to control or prevent the foreigners from committing crime.

The he mean of foreign immigrants indicated a high level of worry among respondents. The criminal worries towards the presence of foreign immigrants in residential areas, security laws against foreign migrants, crimes committed by foreigners and increase in violent and property crimes by foreigners were 4.13, 3.96, 4.23 and 4.25 respectively.

Table 1.2: The Respondents' Perceptions of Criminal Worries Involving Foreign Immigrants

Foreign immigrants	Level of criminal worries										
	Very unworried		Un worried		Neutral		Worried		Very worried		Mean
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	
Are you worried about the presence of foreigners in your area of residence?	8	2.0	20	5.0	74	18.5	110	27.5	188	47.0	4.13
Are you concerned about the rules/laws of safety against foreigners in public places?	18	4.5	34	8.5	69	17.3	105	26.3	174	43.5	3.96

Are you worried about the criminal activities done by foreigners?	11	2.8	18	4.5	48	12.0	116	29.0	207	51.7	4.23
Are you worried about the increase of violent crimes by foreigners?	9	2.3	17	4.3	52	13.0	108	27.0	214	53.5	4.25
Are you worried about the increase of property crimes by foreigners?	6	1.5	19	4.8	60	15.0	99	24.8	216	54.0	4.25

4.2 The mean difference of socio-demographic factors with foreign immigrants by t-test and ANOVA

The analysis of t-test indicates that there was a significant difference between men and women on the aspect of foreign immigrants ($t = -6.07$, $df = 398$, $P < 0.001$). It was found that the mean score of women was higher than men, thereby reflecting more worries among women towards foreign immigrants (Table 1.3).

Table 1.3: Mean Difference of Gender with Foreign Immigrants by T-Test

Factor	Gender	Mean	SD	t (df)	P-value
Foreign immigrants	Men	19.57	4.96	-6.07 (398)	<0.001*
	Women	22.29	3.76		

* P-value is significant at $P < 0.05$

ANOVA test analysis was applied to assess the mean difference between three or more demographic groups on foreign immigrants (Table 1.4). The results showed that there were significant differences in immigrants by ethnicity [$F(3, 396) = 11.92$, $P < 0.001$] and number of children [$F(2, 397) = 4.84$, $P = 0.008$]. However, there was no significant difference in foreign immigrant factor according to marital status, occupation, education level and monthly income ($P > 0.05$).

Table 1.4: Mean Difference of Other Socio-Demographic Factors with Foreign Immigrants by ANOVA (N=400)

Socio-demographic factors		n	Mean	SD	ANOVA	
					F (df)	P-value
Ethnicity	Malay	297	21.56	4.38	11.92 (3, 396)	<0.001*
	Chinese	63	17.98	4.52		
	Indian	34	19.74	4.99		
	Others	6	19.67	5.72		
Marital	Married	255	21.08	4.58		

status	Widowed	19	21.11	4.05	1.47 (2, 397)	0.231
	Single	126	20.22	4.85		
Occupation	Government	181	21.52	4.46	2.20 (4, 395)	0.068
	Private	162	20.33	4.72		
	Self-employed	50	19.90	4.79		
	Housewife	4	18.75	6.85		
	Pensioner	3	21.33	3.22		
Education level	Bachelor's degree and above	53	20.32	4.51	2.10 (5, 394)	0.065
	Diploma	126	20.16	5.12		
	STPM	29	20.34	5.47		
	SPM	161	21.71	3.89		
	SRP/PMR	26	20.12	5.03		
	Vocational certificate	5	19.60	6.77		
Monthly income	RM 1,000 and below	65	20.95	4.62	1.77 (5, 394)	0.117
	RM 1,001–RM 2,000	138	21.14	4.39		
	RM 2,001–RM 3,000	110	20.92	4.61		
	RM 3,001–RM 4,000	51	20.53	5.12		
	RM 4,001–RM 5,000	20	20.80	4.11		
	RM 5,001 and above	16	17.56	5.70		
Number of children	None	165	20.57	4.73	4.84 (2, 397)	0.008*
	1-4	203	21.33	4.38		
	5 and above	32	18.72	5.34		

* P-value is significant at $P < 0.05$

Post-hoc test shows that there was a significant difference between the ethnic groups of Malay and Chinese (Mean difference=3.57, $P < 0.001$). The mean score of Malay group was higher than Chinese, hence indicates that worries among Malay group was higher over foreign migrants (Table 1.5).

Table 1.5: Post-Hoc Gabriel Test of Foreign Immigrants for Ethnic

Ethnic	Ethnic	Mean difference	Standard error	P-value
Malay	Chinese	3.57	0.62	<0.001*
	Indian	1.82	0.81	0.073
	Others	1.89	1.84	0.738
Chinese	Malay	-3.57	0.62	<0.001*
	Indian	-1.75	0.95	0.324
	Others	-1.68	1.91	0.900
Indian	Malay	-1.82	0.81	0.073
	Chinese	1.75	0.95	0.324
	Others	0.07	1.98	1.000
Others	Malay	-1.89	1.84	0.738
	Chinese	1.68	1.91	0.900
	Indian	-0.07	1.98	1.000

* P-value is significant at $P < 0.05$

While post-hoc test for number of children shows that there was a significant difference between the group having one to four children and the group having five children and above (Mean difference=2.62, $P = 0.004$). The group score of one to four children was higher than those with five children and above, hence, worries over foreign migrant factor among group of less children was higher.

Table 1.6: Post-Hoc Gabriel Test of Foreign Immigrants for Number of Children

Number of children	Number of children	Mean difference	Standard error	P-value
None	1-4	-0.77	0.48	0.303
	5 and above	1.85	0.89	0.077
1-4	None	0.77	0.48	0.303
	5 and above	2.62	0.88	0.004*
5 and above	None	-1.85	0.89	0.077
	1-4	-2.62	0.88	0.004*

* P-value is significant at $P < 0.05$

4.3 The relationship between the aspect of foreign immigrants and criminal worries

Based on the correlation analysis, there was a significant moderate positive correlation between the immigrants and criminal worries among respondents ($r = 0.68$). Table 1.7 shows that the correlation coefficient (r) is 0.68, and P-value is less than 0.01. This indicates that the increase in the number of foreign immigrants would contribute to high level of criminal worries among people in Penang.

Table 1.7: The relationship between foreign immigrants and criminal worries by Pearson correlation

Relationship		Criminal worries	Foreign immigrants
Criminal worries	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	400	
Foreign immigrants	Pearson Correlation	0.68**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	400	400

** Correlation is significant at $P < 0.05$

V. DISCUSSION

This study found that the arrival of foreign immigrants has contributed to the criminal worries among the community in Penang. The influx of immigrants in Malaysia raises not only the criminal activities but also the flaws in the monitoring system of foreigners. Many crimes such as robberies and burglaries by foreign immigrants have occurred recently and hence have triggered most of Malaysians' fear. It is therefore clear that this foreign immigrant factor can act as a signal of criminal behaviors within the society. The presence of foreign immigrants causes locals to feel worried because of their criminal activity. Communities have the perception that foreigners have high tendency to commit property and violent crimes.

The economic development of a country has given an impact on the migration of locals and migrants from neighbouring countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and Bangladesh. Migration of the population is considered a necessity for some groups to improve their economic status as well as their families. The influx of foreigners is widespread because of the large number of job opportunities, particularly in the manufacturing, industrial, tourism and maid service sectors. Most local employers prefer foreign workers to work in their company due to lower wage demand, as well as the need for a large labour force. Political instability and poverty in home countries also encourage them to start a new life in a safer state like Penang. Therefore, these immigrants will try their best to enter Malaysia, either through lawful or illegitimate ways.

The influx of immigrants is seen to help the country in achieving a developed economic status, but from the other point of view the rise of this group can lead to increase in crimes, especially among illegal immigrants. The break-ups, robbery, prostitution and rape caused by foreigners have been alarming for locals. The involvement of foreigners in crimes in Penang is evidenced by the existence of prostitution centres and dangerous drug smuggling activities. The arrest of prostitutes from neighbouring countries such as Thailand and China shows that prostitution and human trafficking activities have become increasingly uncontrollable. The surge of drug syndicates involving foreigners in Penang also reflects their courage to challenge the law and endanger their 'second home' (*Borneo Post Online*, April 2010).

The rise in crime caused by the increasing foreigners has raised the local population's concerns and suspicion towards all foreigners. This situation can lead to discrimination and isolation of the immigrants, hence, increasing the economic and social gaps between them and the residents as a result of dissatisfaction with their failure to be accepted by the local community. Such situations will only prompt them to commit crimes to liberate themselves from the grip of poverty and isolation.

Additionally, the influx of foreign workers to Malaysia has contributed to emergence of social crime problems. The increase of foreign immigrants in the country leads to the limitation of involvement in the employment sector, hence giving them an easy access to committing crime in order to survive. The common crimes committed by them are robberies, house breaks, vehicle and property thefts as well as violence. In Malaysia, the presence of unskilled foreign workers is seen to increase the inequality of wages through lower wages to skilled workers (Devadason, 2013). From a social perspective, issues related to foreign workers are due to service inequalities in terms of the employment and the worst workplace provided to the unskilled foreign workers. The rise in crime is often attributed to the overwhelming number of foreign workers.

According to Abdul Rahman and others (2012), one of the negative effects influenced by foreign workers in the construction industry in Malaysia is the increase in criminal activity. While Malaysia relies on foreign workers to sustain economic growth, their influx raises serious problems and give impact to the country. The uncontrolled foreign immigrants trigger the socio-economic and health implications of the population.

Bianchi, Buonanno and Pinotti (2012) explained that the presence of ethnic minorities and migrant groups are often associated with crimes and fear of crimes. Some studies also showed that the presence of certain ethnic groups is more likely to be treated by various types of crimes (Beckley, 2013; Hawkins, 2011). Ethnic minorities are said to be more likely to engage in criminal activities such as drug trafficking, which has a major impact on criminal worries, as compared to other criminal activities often committed by the ethnic majority (Paoli & Reuter, 2008).

Crimes are usually done by immigrants from poor countries, or those with a weak position in the labour market. Other researchers emphasized that migration can also lead to cultural or symbolic threats, as migrant groups are said to be challenging the dominant culture in a society (Drakulich, 2013; Semyonov *et. al*, 2012; Wang, 2012; Wickes *et. al*, 2013). This sense of disturbance among the majority of society exists when cultural distance with a group of foreign immigrants is considered to be larger due to different religious or cultural backgrounds. Fear of crime can also be considered a realistic threat element, as members of the majority group have proven to be more

worried in crime and security due to the presence of ethnic minority such as the foreigner in their community (in Hooghe and De Vroome, 2016).

A study conducted by Hooghe and De Vroome (2016) identified the impact of foreign immigrant groups on criminal worries among people in Belgium. The study found that if the majority of the population felt unsafe because of the presence of foreign immigrant groups, even with good criminal control, then this would indirectly affect the behaviour of the population. Most people who felt insecure will reduce their activity and level of social interaction. In fact, there were few residents who are willing to move from the neighbourhood of urban areas to the countryside, but this move is seen to have no effect if they still felt threatened economically or culturally with the presence of this ethnic minority.

Criminal conducts by foreign migrants are also due to their indolence to work. In addition to the lower wage rates they receive as compared to local workers, tedious working conditions at construction sites or at farms influence them to drag and drop. Consequently, they try to find money in a simple way by being thieves, drug traffickers, murderers, pirates, kidnappers and so on. Other factors that cause foreigners to commit crimes are low level of education and lack of religious beliefs. The majority of immigrants who migrate to Malaysia have a low socio-economic background. With such a low level of education and a loose religious belief, they would be easily influenced by friends to participate in criminal activities. This is further ignited by the challenges of living in the city. As a result, the crimes committed by this group cause fear and worries among the local community.

VI. CONCLUSION

A signal of crime study is related to signals of antisocial behaviors committed by foreign immigrants and their effects on individuals, neighborhoods and society. Fear of crimes is a significant social problem that affects adults and youth. Fear of victimization and the anxieties or worries associated with fear are believed to have detrimental effects on one's quality of life, well-being, and mental health.

Ironically, the influx of foreigners has a direct relationship to the aspect of public safety in Malaysia. Based on the Quality of Life Index, public safety is one of the important factors in determining the quality of life in Malaysia. The presence of foreign immigrants need to be viewed comprehensively as they also contribute to the statistics of crime index in the country. Therefore, public safety aspects need to be assessed, especially by the agencies that are directly responsible for the influx of foreigners whether their entry is legal or illegal, and their pattern of movement creates formal or informal organizations.

In order to ensure effective controlling and monitoring of foreign immigrants, a comprehensive implementation should be realized in accordance to the changes in situations and scenarios as well as economic, social and political developments. This dimension is able to influence the migration factors and regimes to the country. In order to control of immigrants who work as laborers and maids, an enforcement approach should be applied by not allowing any foreign immigrants to leave their settlements beyond one kilometre distance. If they want to get out of the area's limit, then the employer or agent should bring them to the relevant location while controlling their activities. Moreover, they should not be permitted to go out freely without reporting their outbound

status. Thus, employers need to hire few employees to maximize the controlling and monitoring of migrant workers. This approach can reduce or prevent the involvement of foreigners in criminal and misconduct activities.

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