

CAPITAL UTILIZATION AND HAPPINESS OF LABOUR MIGRANT HOUSEHOLDS, THAILAND

Wanichcha Narongchai^{1*}, Dusadee Ayuwat² and Adirek Rengmanawong³

^{1,2}*Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Labour and International Migration Service Center, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Khon Kaen University, Thailand*

³*Khon Kaen Provincial Health Office, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand*

Abstract: This study tried to compare the differences of capital utilization and happiness of labour migrant households in the Northeast, Thailand by some characteristics. The research used the quantitative methodology. Samples of the research were random from the households engaging in international migrants within a year at Chaiyaphum Province – the Provinces in the region with the highest international migrant of 334 households. The research instrument, the interview schedule, was reliable at 0.913 levels. The data were collected during July, 2017 and analyzed based on descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVA for hypothesis testing. The result indicated that the extended family had a significance capital utilization level and happiness level more than single family and skipped family at level 0.05. The household with both male head households and labours had significance capital utilization level and happiness level more than others and also found that the household with both female head households and labours had the lowest of capital utilization level and happiness level. The households with the remittance more than 940 US\$ had a significance capital utilization level and happiness level more than others at level 0.05. The results also indicated that the households with high investment from the remittance had a significance capital utilization level and happiness level more than others at level 0.01.

Keywords: Capital utilization, Capital, Livelihoods, Happiness, Labour Migrant Households

Introduction

Migration has been considered as one of livelihood strategies among rural people in northeastern region of Thailand (Ayuwat, 2006). Migration to work abroad is beneficial to migrant households at the origin area due to the remittances they received. However, although migration provides advantages to migrant households, some disadvantages take place to migrant households and labor themselves. Migrant households have faced with pressures from many reasons while their household members are working abroad. For instance, household debt from migration expense, or labor shortage in household agricultural activity (Markova, 2010)

The migration impacts mostly relate to working condition and lifestyle of the migrants at the destination country (Ayuwat, Im-emtham and Teerawisit, 2010). If the migrants have negative experiences in working or living, the chance of migration failure is high. Migrant households at origin area are unavoidably hit by those negative impacts. Moreover, duration of working abroad significantly correlates to livelihoods of migrant households. While the migrants are leaving their households to work abroad for 3-5 years depending on employment contract, and their households encounter many difficulties in livings (Attorney General's Office, 2014).

Therefore, the success of migrant labours becomes a crucial tool that improves socio-economic status of migrant households at place of origin. Meanwhile, the households are facing with a labor shortage to help household production activity situation. The households have to adjust themselves to deal against several problems. For instance, work allocation within the household, or managing of the debt, which caused by migration expenses. (Ayuwat and Chamarattana, 2014). In addition, the households have to deal with mental condition, social environment, and livelihoods. These conditions inseparably relate to the happiness of migrant labour households at place of origin. Therefore, it is important to analyze characteristics of migrant labour households

that confront to low capacity of capital utilization and the low level of happiness, in order to construct guidelines of promoting capital utilization and the happiness among migrant labour households.

Objectives

To compare capital utilization and happiness of the migrant labour households in the rural northeastern region of Thailand.

Literature reviews

Concepts of livelihoods and happiness have been applied to the study. Details of concepts as follows.

1. Livelihoods; is an interdisciplinary concept which focuses on household's accessibility to livelihood capitals (assets). Frankenberger, Drinkwater, and Maxwell (2000) identify the types of the capital that the households applied to sustain their living. The capitals consist of;

Financial capital denotes an economic resource that people use to achieve their goals of living. It can be divided into 2 main sources which are 1) available stocks which are in forms of savings and credit. Another source is regular inflows of money which refer to income, remittance, and pension

Human capital denotes skills, experiences, and ability that are embedded in individuals or labor force. It can be accumulated through education, training, and experience. (World Bank, 1995) The increase of human capital can predict more productivity which results in more earned incomes.

Social capital includes network, membership, individual relationships, etc. Social capital is as a product of social structures and processes which connection of networks or institutional relationships among individuals and groups (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992)

Natural capital denotes the accumulation of natural resources, such as land, wildlife, forests, water resources, etc, that people use to sustain livelihood outcomes (Aronson et al., 2007)

Physical capital is the tangible resource that people construct such as roads, communication networks, irrigated canal, and machines in the factory. In addition, it refers to a capital for production. (Goodwin, 2006)

This study investigated livelihoods through the various types of capitals that the migrant labour households used to achieve livelihood objectives. The livelihood capitals include financial capital, human capital, physical capital, natural capital, and social capital, and it is defined as variable of capital utilization of the labor migrant households.

2. Concepts of Happiness: "happiness" is a term that has been defined by various agencies, such as Department of Mental Health, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand (2007). Happiness denotes the living condition with good things. It also is a positive moment that causes from living skills, problem management, socio-environmental condition, and mental and physical condition of individuals. In addition, the Thai Health Organization. (2007) has determined 8 indicators of happiness including (1) happy body, (2) happy heart, (3) happy relax, (4) happy brain, (5) happy soul, (6) happy money, (7) happy family, and (8) happy society. This paper applies a concept of happiness (Thai Health Organization, 2007) to study the happiness of labor migrant households.

The study defines the household happiness as a circumstance that household members, including migrant labours, have good relationships to each other, financial security, well debt management, well stress management, healthy condition among household members, good relationships with neighbors, life and property security, and convenient life from household facilities. These terms are derived from the qualitative findings

which investigate perspectives of the migrant labour households toward the happiness. A conceptual framework is constructed as in figure 1.

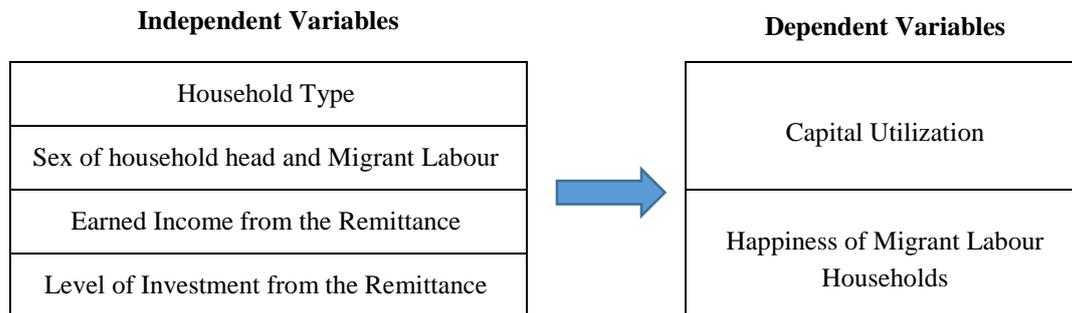


Figure 1A conceptual framework

Methodology

The research used the quantitative methodology. Samples of the research were random from the households engaging in international migration within a year at Chaiyaphum Province – the Provinces in the region with the highest international migrant of 334 households. The research instrument, the interview schedule, was reliable at 0.913 levels.

The dependent variables consisted of capital utilization and happiness of migrant labour households, which were measured by interval scale. While independent variables consisted of household type, sex of household head and migrant labour, earned income from the remittance, and level of investment from the remittance. These variables were measured by nominal scale and ordinal scale.

Data collection was done in June, 2017 with the migrant labour households. One-way ANOVA was applied to compare capital utilization and the happiness of migrant labour households, and the Least Significant Difference (LSD) method was applied to test all the pairwise means. Data was presented by the description with tables.

Results

The results covers the characteristics of the migrant labour households and migrant labours, capital utilization of the migrant labour households, and happiness of the migrant labour households, and comparison on capital utilization and the happiness of the migrant labour household as following details”

1. Characteristics of migrant labour households and migrant labours

Characteristics of migrant labour households indicated that most households had number of households not over 3 members (47.6 percent). 79.6 percent of households had members who were at labor age (15-59 years old), and 16.5 percent of households had no member who were at labor age. 45.2 percent of households were the extended household in which 3 generations of household members have lived together, and 20.1% of households were the skipped-generation household which consisted of grandparents and grandchildren, while parents of children were working abroad. This output was confirmed by Narongchai and Ayuwat (2011). 37.4 percent of households had male household head, and migrant labours were male. It is noted that 12.6 percent of households were had female household head, and migrant labours were female. 60.2 percent of households engaged in agriculture, and 41.0 percent of households had an average annual income over 150,000 Thai Baht (USD 4,545). More than half of the householdsample (56.8 percent) had an average annual income less than 20,000 Thai Baht (USD606). Regarding the remittance, most households had low level of investment (45.8 percent). It was found that those households used the remittance to invest in the education of children and

bought household facilities (53.6 percent and 37.1 percent respectively). However, most households had never invested in stocking land as household asset, and never bought land for engaging into agriculture (87.1 percent and 79.0 percent respectively).

Regarding characteristics of migrant labours, data was explored by household member at place of origin. It was found that the majority of migrant labours was male (68.9 percent), and 61.4 percent of them were Generation Y (under 37 years old). Most of migrant labours have migrated to work abroad for 1-5 years (62.2 percent). Most of migrant labours have worked in Southeast Asia and East Asian countries, such as South Korea, Taiwan (73.2 percent). Most of migrant labours used employment service through private recruitment company or labor brokers (39.8 percent), followed by service from state agencies such as the Department of Employment (24.3 percent), legal travelling on their own (17.1 percent), and illegal travelling on their own (14.7 percent). Regarding financial source for migration, a major financial source was household savings (37.7 percent) and informal loans (26.3 percent) respectively. The findings confirm Ayuwat and Chamaratana (2014) who reported that some migrant labours had to make a loan for travelling expenses. In addition, 56.2 percent of migrant labours engaged in industrial tasks, and 24.9 percent of migrant labours engaged in agricultural task.

2. Capital utilization of migrant labour households

According to the interview schedule about capital utilization of migrant labour households (Financial capital, Human capital, Social capital Natural capital and Physical capital) total 38 questions, for interval Scale divide by the score of each question, making comparison to 3 level of capital utilization from summary of the question scores, that are a high level (More than 98 scores) a medium level (69-97 scores) and a low level (Lower than 68 scores). Findings showed that most households engaged in capital utilization at a medium level (60.8 percent). It was also found that 26.0 percent of household engaged in capital utilization at a low level, especially natural capital. 30.0 percent of migrant labour household was not able to access to lands because some households dealt with labor shortage. Thus, they decided allowing other households to rent their lands. Migrant labour households accessed to natural food sources at a high level (44.3 percent), and 44.3 percent of them could not access to transportation facilities to go outside the community. Households had a regular income from agricultural occupation (59.2 percent), but only 48.2 percent of households had savings for emergency expenses. 29.0 percent of household had household members who engaged in a higher education (higher than secondary school). It was found that no member from migrant labour household was at a high-ranked position (group leader/committee) in community groups (71.5 percent).

3. Happiness of migrant labour households

According to the interview schedule about happiness of migrant labour households (the household happiness as a circumstance that household members, including migrant labours, have good relationships to each other, financial security, well debt management, well stress management, healthy condition among household members, good relationships with neighbors, life and property security, and convenient life from household facilities.) total 64 questions, for interval Scale divide by the score of each question, making comparison to 3 level of happiness from summary of the question scores, that are a high level (236-277 scores) a medium level (194-235 scores) and a low level (152-193 scores).

The analysis found that percentage of the average happiness among the migrant labour households was 80.5. More than half of household sample assessed their households had the happiness at a medium level, and only 31.7 percent of them assessed their happiness at a high level. While 17.7 percent of them assessed their happiness at a low level. Comparing to each dimensions of happiness, it was found that percentage of mean of social assistance and responsibility was 89.0 percent and 85.8 percent respectively, but financial security and relaxation were only 67.5 percent and 65.7 percent respectively

4. Comparison on capital utilization and happiness of migrant labour household

When comparing capital utilization and happiness of migrant labour household toward four variables of household characteristics including 1) household type, 2) sex of household head and migrant labour, 3) earned income from the remittance, and 4) level of investment from the remittance. Findings found differences between capital utilization and happiness of migrant labour household (Table 1) as following details.

4.1 Household type; showed that the households with different types would have significant difference toward capital utilization with statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Considering pair wise comparison, the extended household would have more capital utilization than the single household and the skipped-generation household with the means of 81.7, 77.3 and 75.4 respectively. Level of capital utilization among the extended household was increasing because the extended household might have more household members, and there were labor-aged members living in the households. (Katewongsa, 2017)

Meanwhile the households with different types would have significant difference toward happiness of migrant labour household with statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Considering pairwise comparison, the extended household would have more happiness than the single household and the skipped-generation household with the means of 226.3, 219.8, and 221.3 respectively. The findings were presented because the extended household had relationships and conducted household activity more than the single household and the skipped-generation household. Therefore, the extended household was happier than other household types because they have all generations living together. (Komjakraphan and Chansawang, 2016)

4.2 Sex of household head and migrantlabour showed that the different sex of household head and migrant labour would have significant difference toward capital utilization with statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Considering pairwise comparison, the household with male head and male migrant labour would have more capital utilization than the household with female head and female migrant labour with the means of 82.0 and 74.2 respectively.

Meanwhile the different sex of household head and migrant labour would have significant difference toward happiness of migrant labour household with statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Considering pairwise comparison, the household with male head and male migrant labour would have more happiness than the household with female head and female migrant labour with the means of 225.1, 219.9, and 221.3 respectively. The findings were presented because the household with male head and male migrant labour might have gender expectation from community more than household with female head, while male migrant labour would have more options on working abroad and earned incomes than female migrant labours. Therefore, this contributed the household with male head and male migrant labour to receive high support from community and be happier than household with female head and female migrant labour. (International Labour Office, Sub-regional Office for East Asia, 2007)

4.3 Earned income from the remittance showed that households with different earned incomes from the remittance would have significant difference toward capital utilization with statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Considering pairwise comparison, household that earned the remittance from migrant labour more than 30,000 Baht per month would have more capital utilization than household that earned the remittance from migrant labour between 15,000-30,000 Baht per month and household that earned the remittance from migrant labour less than 15,000 Baht per month. In addition, household that earned the remittance from migrant labour between 15,000-30,000 Baht per month would have more capital utilization than household that earned the remittance from migrant labour less than 15,000 Baht per month.

Meanwhile household that earned the remittance from migrant labour more than 30,000 Baht per month would have more happiness than household that earned the remittance from migrant labour between 15,000-30,000 Baht per month, household that earned the remittance from migrant labour less than 15,000 Baht per month, and

household that did not earn the remittance from migrant labour. In addition, household that earned the remittance from migrant labour between 15,000-30,000 Baht per month would have more happiness than household that earned the remittance from migrant labour less than 15,000 Baht per month. The household that earned high income from the remittance might have more chances of living than the household that earned lower income from the remittance or those household who never receive the remittance. It resulted in household members were not concern to much about household expenses, and it affected to happiness of the household. (Arvin, and Lew, 2002)

4.4 Level of investment from the remittance showed that households with different levels of investment from remittance would have significant difference toward capital utilization with statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Considering pairwise comparison, household that had high level of investment would have more capital utilization than household that had medium level of investment and household that had low level of investment. While, household that had medium level of investment would have more capital utilization than household that had low level of investment because the high remittance they earned allowed accessing to the capitals easily. In addition, households with different level of investment from the remittance had no difference toward happiness of migrant labour household at the 0.05 level. (Chami, and Jahjah, 2005)

Table 1 Average and Standard Deviation of capital utilization and the happiness of migrant labours households, classified by independent variables.

Independent Variables	Capital utilization			Happiness of migrant labour households		
	Mean	S.D.	F	Mean	S.D.	F
1. Household type						
[ExHH] The extended household (151)	81.7	15.9	4.814**	226.3	22.5	5.080*
[SHH] The single household (104)	77.3	15.8		219.8	21.1	
[SGHH] The skipped-generation household (79)	75.4	15.6		221.3	20.9	
The pairwise means with LSD	ExHH > SHH ExHH > SGHH			ExHH > SHH ExHH > SGHH		
2. Sex of household head and migrant labour						
[M/M] The household with male head and male migrant labour (125)	82.0	15.6	4.162**	225.1	22.5	4.942*
[M/Fm] The household with male head and female migrant labour (62)	80.4	16.1		224.2	21.0	
[Fm/Fm] The household with female head and female migrant labour (42)	74.2	15.9		219.9	24.0	
[Fm/M] The household with female head and male migrant labour (105)	76.1	15.6		221.3	20.7	
The pairwise means with LSD	M/M > Fm/Fm M/M > Fm/M			M/M > Fm/Fm M/M > Fm/M		
3. Earned income from the remittance						
[1] The household did not earn remittance (16)	79.1	20.6	6.530**	215.1	29.8	6.662**
[2] The household earn remittance less than 15,000 Bath (96)	74.1	15.6		217.6	21.0	
[3] The household earn remittance between 15,001-30,000 Bath (146)	78.8	15.0		223.2	21.3	
[4] The household earn remittance more than 30,000 Bath (76)	84.7	15.6		231.3	19.8	

The pairwise means with LSD	[4] > [2] [4] > [3] [3] > [2]			[4] > [1] [4] > [2] [4] > [3] [3] > [2]		
4. Level of investment from the remittance						
Low level of investment (119)	73.6	13.7	17.769**	222.3	22.5	1.166
Medium level of investment (147)	80.8	14.9		223.1	19.1	
High level of investment (51)	87.9	17.6		227.6	25.1	
The pairwise means with LSD	High level> Low level High level> Medium level Medium level> Low level			High level> Low level High level> Medium level		

Conclusion and Recommendation

Comparison of differences among characteristics of migrant labour households, capital utilization, and happiness of migrant labour households indicates that household characteristics which included 1) household type, 2) sex of household head and migrant labour, 3) earned income from the remittance, and 4) level of investment from the remittance, have significant difference toward capital utilization with statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Meanwhile, the differences of 1) household type, and 2) sex of household head and migrant labour is significantly different toward happiness of migrant labour households at the 0.05 level, and 3) earned income from the remittance is significantly different toward happiness of migrant labour households at the 0.01 level. However, it was found that households with different levels of investment from the remittance had no significant difference toward happiness of migrant labour household at the 0.05 level.

Additionally, happiness of the migrant labor households depended on worries about the member living abroad, the migrating member's working condition and wages, the member's relation with an opposite sex and relationship with colleagues. These depended on the ability of the migrating laborers to adjust themselves with the new surroundings in the destination place. The recommendation of the study suggest that relevant agencies should pay attention to improve the specific households, which have the lowest level of happiness, to have more happiness level. The specific households include the single household, the households with female-headed household and female migrant labours, and the households that receive the remittance less than 15,000 Thai Baht. In addition, relevant agencies should support the skipped-generation household, the households with female-headed household and female migrant labours, and the households that receive the remittance less than 15,000 Thai Baht to have more capital utilization in order to enhance the happiness of the migrant labour household. Government should be involve in the role of supporter to help specific households especially those poverty households that have less opportunities or ability in career.

Acknowledgements

This article uses the information from the research project on "Happiness of Migrant labour Households in the Northeast, Thailand." The research scholarship was granted by Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Khon Kaen University. The researchers extend their thanks to all migrant labor households under this study and officers of the Sub-District Health Promotion Hospital for their good cooperation in the data collection process.

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