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## Counselling on Job Application Letter Writing for Migrant Workers in Malaysia

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**ABSTRACT** This community service is carried out based on the results of observations of migrant workers in Malaysia who are considered to lack understanding in writing the correct job application letter. So, it is necessary to have counselling on writing the proper job application letter to help migrant workers in Malaysia increase their understanding of writing the proper job application letter. This activity aims to increase the ability of migrant workers in Malaysia to write correct job application letters. This activity was carried out in three stages: preparation, implementation, and evaluation. This community service activity involved 60 participants who were Indonesian Migrant Workers in Malaysia. The survey method used to obtain data is distributing questionnaires to all participants before and after counselling. The survey results showed a significant increase in the understanding of counselling participants about writing the correct job application letter. This indicates that this activity provides benefits and positive impacts for participants.

**Keywords:** *Counselling; Job Application Letter; PMI*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the jobs in the domestic sector is becoming an Indonesian Migrant Worker (PMI). Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) is every Indonesian who meets the qualifications to work abroad for a predetermined period by receiving wages by the agreement. Adha, Zaeni, & Rahmawati (2020); Devi & Asyhadie (2022); Solechan, Utami, & Azhar (2020) argue that every Indonesian citizen who will, is, or has worked for a salary outside the territory of the Republic of Indonesia is called an Indonesian migrant worker. Indonesian Migrant Workers are one of the country's most significant foreign exchange contributors (Nidatya et al., 2023). The Indonesian Migrant Workers Protection Agency (BP2MI) reported that PMI earned around 157.6 trillion rupiah in 2020 (Rahman et al., 2021). This is inseparable from the many migrant workers who can be employed abroad.

Every year, Indonesia's population increases rapidly, which results in additional labor. However, the additional workforce cannot be adequately distributed because the number of

available jobs is limited (Fitria, 2022; Nabila, 2022; Ratihtiari & Parsa, 2019). Challenging job opportunities in Indonesia and limited education levels make competing with graduates looking for work more complex in their own country (Deputra et al., 2021; Rahman et al., 2021). In other words, even if they work as unskilled labourers or domestic assistants, prospective workers eventually choose to work abroad because of the high wages and more excellent career opportunities. Anggreini & Herlina (2019); Magdalena (2020) also argue that conditions in Indonesia that influence the international migration process are low levels of family welfare, low availability of employment, and lack of capital to start a business in the country. The lack of need for a high educational background and high salaries combined with foreign exchange rates are other reasons that make Indonesian citizens tempted to become Indonesian migrant workers. This has a positive impact because it can reduce Indonesia's very high unemployment rate.

Siagian & Khuzaini (2015) argue that human resources are the company's most important asset because they are subjects of implementing policies and operational activities. Resources such as capital, methods, and machines cannot provide the best results without being supported by optimally performing human resources. As a result, people are competing to get a good education. Especially with the rapid development of science and technology, competition has become more intense, and the only people who can compete are those who are superior, innovative, and of high quality. Education is gathering information and knowledge for future provision and improving existing abilities and potential.

In addition to formal education, there are other ways to improve one's abilities, namely by training. Training can add insight and improve one's abilities (Sari & Dinihari, 2023). Training allows employees to acquire new knowledge and principles, which help them advance their careers and complete the tasks assigned to them. Training is an important thing that organizations can do. Organizations must have a workforce with the knowledge, abilities, and skills to meet current and future needs (Siagian & Khuzaini, 2015).

One form of the capacity-building effort carried out by the authorized parties is holding counselling for PMI in Malaysia with the theme "Counselling on Writing Correct Job Application Letters for PMI in Malaysia." This community service activity is expected to increase knowledge and develop PMI abilities in Malaysia. This is by the purpose of holding training or counselling, namely to develop a person's ability or develop existing potential.

The ability to use refined Indonesian spelling is one of the supporters of success in communication, especially in written language (Wati et al., 2017). In addition, having the ability to communicate in written language is also very necessary to convince company managers (Hasyimi et al., 2021). That is what is needed in writing a job application letter. Before applying for a job, of

course, a letter is needed to apply for a job. An application letter is the first step toward employment (Ismiyati et al., 2022; Nariyah et al., 2021; Seli & Anggih, 2021). Therefore, everyone needs to learn to write a good job letter. Sari & Dinihari (2023) stated that writing a job application letter requires good language skills and must be written well by paying attention to vocabulary and using standard language. In general, the content of a job application letter consists of an opening section, an introduction, brief personal data, the purpose of making a job application, a list of file attachments, and a closing section. In addition, what must be considered is that the applicant must include brief personal data, the purpose of the applicant, and what type of job the applicant wants (Simanjuntak & Saragih, 2021).

## **2. METHOD**

This community service was carried out by teaching migrant workers in Malaysia about writing good and correct job application letters. The activity involved around 60 migrant workers in Malaysia. This community service is carried out through 3 stages, namely the preparation stage, the implementation stage, and the evaluation stage. The following is an explanation of each stage. Please cite the previous method publication, if you refer to the published article, and explain the detail, if you modify the method.

### **2.1 Preparation Stage**

In this preparatory Stage, a survey was conducted to find the problems experienced by PMI by conducting interviews with the party in charge of PMI in Malaysia. This survey was conducted online with the person in charge of PMI in Malaysia. After obtaining the initial data, a new service activity plan was developed according to the conditions of the problems faced by PMI in writing the correct job application letter to develop PMI's abilities.

### **2.2 Implementation Stage**

Participants were taught how to write a good and correct job application letter at this stage. The material presented starts from the importance of job application letters, components, formats, tips on using polite and formal language, how to align application letters with job vacancies, common mistakes in writing job application letters, tips for writing good job application letters, guidelines for writing correct job application letters, adequate job preparation, adequate job interview preparation, and tips for successful job interviews. After the presentation of the material, a question-and-answer session was held, and participants were allowed to ask the speaker related to the material that had been delivered.

### 2.3 Evaluation Stage

This evaluation stage was carried out by giving questionnaires to all participants before and after attending the counselling. This questionnaire aims to obtain data and determine the benefits of this counselling activity.

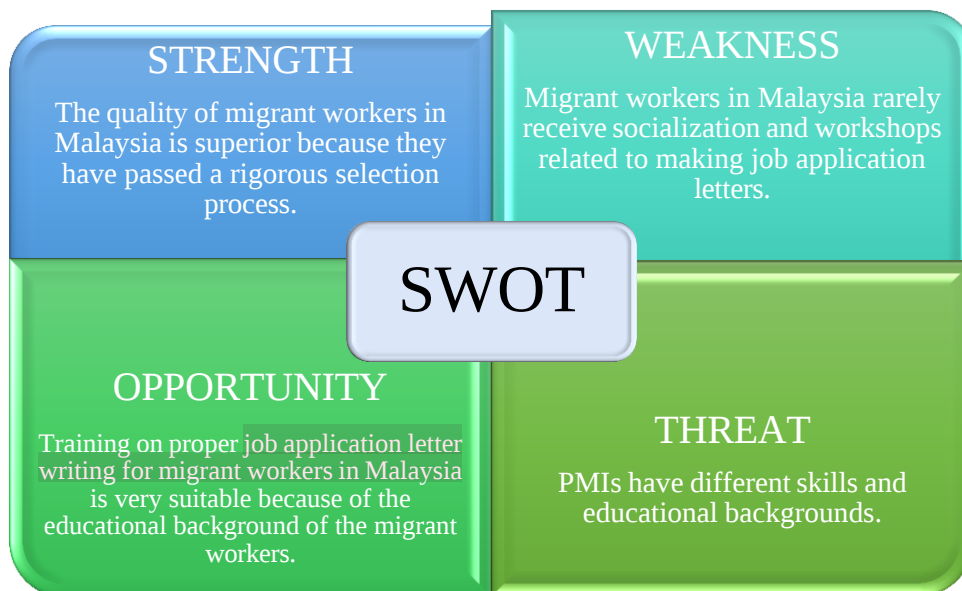
## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This Community Service activity was carried out on Saturday, December 09, at the Hall of the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur. This activity was attended by 60 participants who were Indonesian Migrant Workers in Malaysia.

The following is a more detailed explanation of the results of the implementation of extension activities in each method and Stage.

### 3.1 Preparation Stage

The first thing to do in this research is to set an initial goal to help migrant workers develop the ability of migrant workers in Malaysia to write correct job application letters. After identifying the existing problems, a SWOT analysis was designed to ensure the solution was on target. The SWOT analysis is exposed in the following chart.



**Figure 1.** SWOT Analysis Chart

#### 3.1.1 Strength

Of course, the PMIs who participated in the counselling in this service activity are PMIs who have superior quality. To become a PMI in Malaysia, one must pass a rigorous selection. So, the

skills or abilities possessed by PMIs are, of course, also different because PMIs have different educational backgrounds.

### 3.1.2 Weakness

Migrant workers in Malaysia rarely get socialization and workshops on writing the proper job application letter, which results in a lack of understanding of writing the proper job application letter, so partners must be given materials and instructions for writing the proper job application letter.

### 3.1.3 Opportunity

Writing a job application letter correctly is essential when someone applies for a job. Writing an attractive and precise job application letter is one of the determinants of whether or not an applicant is accepted in a company or place that is applied for. This is one of the reasons for holding community service activities, which provides counselling on writing the correct job application letter. In addition, most migrant workers are high school graduates, so the government or competent parties need to improve the ability or skills of migrant workers. There are 47,389 Indonesian Migrant Workers who have an education below high school (SMA) (Hidayah & Ufran, 2022).

### 3.1.4 Threat

The PMIs have different expertise, so their skills are also different because the educational background of each counselling participant is different. This also makes the capture of the material presented different for each participant. Therefore, it can be a threat to the success of this service.

Based on the SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats), the service team provides problem solutions to existing problems, namely the lack of understanding of migrant workers in Malaysia about writing the correct job application letter. With this counselling, it is hoped that the understanding of the counselling participants will increase.



Figure 2. Flyer of Community Service Activities

### 3.2 Implementation Stage

Several lecturers from various campuses conducted this PPM activity with different training materials. One of the materials presented was "Counseling on Writing Correct Job Application Letters for PMI in Malaysia".



**Figure 3.** Opening of Extension Activities



**Figure 4.** Material Exposure

The PPM activity implementation team presented material on writing a correct job application letter. The speaker explained the importance of job application letters, components of job application letters, job application letter formats, tips on using polite and formal language, aligning application letters with job vacancies, common mistakes in writing job application letters, tips for writing good job application letters, examples of effective job application letters, guidelines for writing correct job application letters, adequate job interview preparation, and bonus tips for success in job interviews. After presenting the material, participants were allowed to ask questions related to the material that had been delivered. Here, some participants asked questions related to the material that the speaker had delivered.

### 3.3 Evaluation

The last stage was evaluation by giving questionnaires to counselling participants. The questionnaire was given directly because the participants could not hold a cell phone, so the questionnaire could not be done online via Google Forms.



Figure 5. Questionnaire Filling

The results of filling out the questionnaire can be seen in the table below.

Table 1. PMI's understanding of job application letter writing

| Question Item | Answer (%)     |                |               |                 |                |               |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|
|               | Pre-Counseling |                |               | Post-Counseling |                |               |
|               | Ever/Yes       | Maybe/Slightly | Never/Not Yet | Ever/Yes        | Maybe/Slightly | Never/Not Yet |
| 1.            | 100%           |                |               |                 |                |               |
| 2.            | 100%           |                |               |                 |                |               |
| 3.            | 30%            |                | 70%           |                 |                |               |
| 4.            | 50%            |                | 50%           |                 |                |               |
| 5.            |                | 30%            | 70%           | 60%             | 40%            |               |
| 6.            | 80%            | 20%            |               | 100%            |                |               |
| 7.            | 80%            | 20%            |               | 100%            |                |               |
| 8.            | 60%            | 40%            |               | 100%            |                |               |
| 9.            | 40%            | 20%            | 40%           | 80%             | 20%            |               |
| 10.           | 100%           |                |               | 80%             | 20%            |               |

Table 1 above shows that, on question item 1 about whether or not participants have ever written a job application letter, 100% of participants answered that they had both pre and post-counselling. For question item 2 about whether or not they had made common mistakes in writing job application letters, 100% of participants also answered that they had both pre and post-counselling. For question item 3 about whether or not they have used impolite and informal language in writing job application letters, some participants answered 30% and 70% never. Question item 4 relates to whether or not participants have ever written a job application letter with job vacancies that are not aligned. Some participants answered that they had as much as 50% and never as much as 50%. Question item 5, have you been able to prepare for an effective job

interview or not, 30% answered maybe and 70% answered no at pre-training, while post-training 60% answered already and 40% answered maybe. For question 6 related to how important it is to write a suitable or appropriate job application letter, 80% of participants answered very important and 20% answered important at pre-counselling, while post-counselling all participants answered very important. Question 7 on whether a job application letter affects whether a person can be hired or not, as many as 80% answered yes and 20% answered maybe at pre-counselling while post-counselling all participants answered yes. Furthermore, in question 8 about knowing what the components of a job application letter are, 60% answered yes and 40% answered maybe at pre-counselling, while at post-counselling all participants answered yes. Question 9 about being able to apply a good and correct job application letter format, 40% answered yes, 20% answered maybe, and 40% answered no at pre-counselling. In the post-counselling session, 80% of the participants answered yes and 20% answered maybe. Finally, in question 10 about being able to create an effective job application letter, all participants answered that they had not at pre-counselling, while at post-counselling 80% answered yes and 20% answered maybe.

Based on the table above, it can be seen that there is a significant increase in the understanding of counselling participants about writing the correct job application letter. This shows that the counselling has been carried out by the objectives of counselling, namely increasing the knowledge and abilities of participants in certain fields by the demands of the world of work (Siagian & Khuzaini, 2015). In other words, this counselling activity can change the knowledge of PMI, from not knowing to knowing or not understanding to understanding.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the implementation of community service activities with the title "Counselling on Writing Job Application Letters for Migrant Workers in Malaysia", it can be concluded that this activity can increase the understanding of migrant workers in Malaysia about writing the correct job application letter. This helps migrant workers to be able to write job application letters correctly, and effectively, and be able to compete in the world of work. In other words, this PPM activity has made a real contribution to the world of work, especially migrant workers in Malaysia, in developing an understanding of the correct writing of job application letters.

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