

Cross-National Labor Migration Between Korea and Vietnam: A Policy Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Globalization has led to a significant increase in international labor migration, particularly in Asia, where migration and investment have surged since the 1990s. As countries adopted open policies and actively integrated into the global economy, Vietnam and South Korea emerged as key players. Both nations, with their comprehensive partnerships, substantial labor forces, and notable investment flows, exemplify this trend. **Methods:** This article employs a policy analysis approach to examine the evolution of labor migration policies in Vietnam and South Korea. The analysis focuses on governmental initiatives and regulatory frameworks designed to improve the conditions for their citizens' participation in the global labor market. **Results:** The findings reveal that both Vietnam and South Korea have implemented significant policy changes to enhance their labor migration systems. These adjustments include the development of more robust legal frameworks, the establishment of bilateral agreements, and the creation of supportive environments for labor migrants. The policy improvements have facilitated increased labor mobility, enhanced protections for migrant workers, and strengthened the bilateral relations between the two countries. **Discussion:** The policy shifts in Vietnam and South Korea demonstrate the importance of government intervention in facilitating labor migration. By proactively adapting their policies to the demands of globalization, both countries have successfully positioned themselves as key participants in the international labor market. However, challenges remain, including ensuring equitable treatment for migrant workers and addressing the socio-economic impacts of migration on both sending and receiving countries. **Conclusion:** In conclusion, the evolution of labor migration policies in Vietnam and South Korea highlights the critical role of governmental action in shaping international labor mobility. As globalization continues to drive migration trends, ongoing policy refinement will be essential to optimizing the benefits of labor migration for both countries and their citizens.

Keywords: International Labor Migration, Globalization, Vietnam, South Korea, Labor Policies, Bilateral Agreements, Migrant Worker Protection, Policy Analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, international labor migration has emerged as a widespread and increasingly

critical phenomenon. Examining labor migration between Vietnam and South Korea is particularly significant due to its multifaceted implications.

First, from a perspective of urgency, labor migration between the two nations has grown substantially since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1992. South Korea has become a vital labor market for Vietnam, employing over 23,000 Vietnamese workers (OECD, 2023), while Vietnam serves as an appealing destination for more than 27,000 South Korean workers (Ministry of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs, 2022). Second, in terms of practical implications, this study offers valuable insights into the patterns and dynamics of labor migration, facilitating the development of effective management strategies and promoting bilateral cooperation in labor and migration policy. Third, from a policymaking standpoint, the analysis of migration policies sheds light on existing management frameworks and strategies, maximizing the socio-economic benefits associated with migration. Finally, regarding prospects for bilateral collaboration, this research contributes to the formulation of sustainable policies, strengthens the labor legal framework, and fosters the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries.

Consequently, this study not only advances academic discourse but also provides substantial practical relevance by informing policy development and addressing labor resource needs across sectors and demographic groups, aligning with the developmental and integration priorities of Vietnam and South Korea.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Push-Pull Theory

In the context of transnational labor migration between Vietnam and South Korea, particularly under the regulation of organized migration programs such as the Employment Permit System (EPS), numerous theoretical frameworks have been developed to explain this phenomenon. These theoretical approaches encompass both classical and contemporary perspectives on international migration.

The principal theoretical frameworks include: (1) Lee's (1966) Push-Pull Factors Theory, (2) Zelinsky's (1971) Mobility Transition Theory, (3) Taylor's (1986) Migrant Networks Theory, and (4) the Transnational Social Spaces Theory proposed by Pries (1999) and Faist (2000). Concurrently, theories from an economic perspective have contributed significant approaches, including: Lewis's (1940) Classical Theory, Harris and Todaro's (1970) Neo-classical Theory, and Piore's (1979) Dual Labor Market Theory.

In this study, the authors employ an analytical framework based on Lee's (1966) push-pull theory to evaluate the impact of migration policies as a bilateral mechanism - functioning simultaneously as both push and pull factors for workers in the context of cross-border

migration between the two nations. Other variables, such as socio-economic conditions, employment opportunities, and income differentials between the two countries, while significant, fall outside the scope of this analysis.

Migrant workers

Foreign workers coming to work in a country are also referred to as "*migrant workers*". According to the Convention adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 18, 1990, under Resolution A/RES/45/158, effective from July 1, 2003, the term "migrant worker" refers to a person who is, has been, or will be engaged in remunerated work in a country where they are not a citizen (Article 2, Clause 1). Article 5 of this Convention distinguishes migrant workers and their family members into two categories: (i) Those with legal documents (or lawful); and (ii) Those without documents (or unlawful). Category (i) comprises individuals authorized by a country to enter, stay, and work for remuneration, while category (ii) includes those denied similar rights.

According to Article 2 (2) (g), the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families defines a subgroup of migrant workers known as *specified employment workers* as follows:

- I. Migrant workers sent by employers to work in a country to perform a specific task or duty within a specified or determinable period;
- II. Individuals engaged for a limited or determinable period in a specific job requiring professional, commercial, technical, or high-level skills;
- III. Individuals recruited by employers in their home country to participate for a limited or determinable period in a job that is by nature temporary or short-term, and they are required to leave the country when the authorized residence period expires, or sooner if they no longer perform the task or duty or cease employment.

Two forms of labor migration, *project-tied workers* and *itinerant workers* (Article 2(2) (f) and Article 2(2) (e)), have characteristics similar to specified employment migration but are more specifically regulated concerning the duration and nature of the work of international migrant workers (United Nations General Assembly, 1990).

Regarding residency status, international migrants typically have either permanent settlement or permanent residence status, both of which are recognized by the host country as granting the right to live and work long-term

without citizenship. The condition is that migrants must possess a residence permit, a document issued by the competent authority of the receiving country to a non-citizen, confirming their right to reside in that country for the validity period of the residence permit (International Organization for Migration, 2011).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Text and Document Analysis Methodology: The exploration of textual materials and documents derived from esteemed international entities such as the OECD, ILO, and various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) constitutes a valuable approach for accessing comprehensive insights into global trends in labor migration and the frameworks governing labor policies. This methodology facilitates a nuanced examination of existing and evolving policy measures designed to regulate labor environments and labor migration, drawing upon authoritative sources such as legal statutes, governmental reports, and press releases.

Survey Administration and Data Processing: The survey was conducted between November 2023 and January 2024, targeting Korean residents living in District 7 and District 2, Ho Chi Minh City. The research population was based on an estimated 6,804 Korean residents (Thao Dien Ward and Tan Phong Ward, 2023) residing in an area of 823.57 hectares, encompassing the wards of Tan Phong and Thao Dien, with a population density of approximately 8.26 individuals per hectare.

Initially, nearly 500 questionnaires were distributed through both online and paper-based formats. The survey received 341 responses, of which 136 were selected for detailed analysis. The sample size of 378 individuals (Slovin's Formula) was determined based on the total population of Korean residents, employing a simple random sampling method to ensure a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error.

The collected data were processed and analyzed using SPSS 20.0 software. This enabled the extraction of relevant findings and detailed statistical interpretations, ensuring the reliability and representativeness of the survey sample.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Cooperation Strategies and Factors Promoting Labor Migration between Vietnam and South Korea Events in Diplomacy and Processes Promoting Labor Cooperation between Vietnam and South Korea

As of December 2024, Vietnam and South Korea have signed over 35 agreements across various fields. Notably, in the areas of trade and labor, the Vietnam-Korea Free Trade Agreement (VKFTA), signed on May

5, 2015, and the Employment Permit System (EPS) for foreign workers in South Korea, which officially came into effect on August 1, 2004, are particularly significant. These agreements have facilitated numerous employment opportunities for Vietnamese workers in South Korea. Especially, to comprehensively protect the rights of workers from both countries while working in each other's territories, amidst the increasing numbers of Vietnamese workers in South Korea and South Korean workers in Vietnam. The subsequent event took place on December 14, 2021, in the capital Seoul, witnessed by the Chairman of the National Assembly Vuong Dinh Hue, representing the Governments of Vietnam and South Korea, Minister of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs of Vietnam - Mr. Dao Ngoc Dung, and Minister of Health and Social Welfare of South Korea - Mr. Kwon Deok Cheol signed a bilateral agreement on social insurance between Vietnam and South Korea. This marks a new step in cooperative relations to ensure social security for the people of both countries.

The labor cooperation policy between Vietnam and South Korea has been implemented since 1993 and has gone through several stages. Cooperation agreements have been signed multiple times in 2004, 2009, 2013, and 2019.

Most recently, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed regarding the dispatch and reception of Vietnamese workers to work in South Korea under the Employment Permit System (EPS) on June 23, 2023. The contents of this MOU also include provisions related to the responsibilities of the dispatching and receiving agencies, dispatch costs, selection procedures, candidate introduction, and contract signing. It also stipulates pre-departure preparations, support during the dispatch and reception of workers, as well as preventive measures and minimization of situations where workers' contracts expire but they do not voluntarily return to their home country. The memoranda of understanding on labor cooperation between Vietnam and South Korea have opened up many job opportunities in South Korea for Vietnamese workers, especially in industries such as manufacturing, shipbuilding, information technology, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, retail services, nursing, and domestic assistance.

International labor agreements between Vietnam and South Korea regarding labor.

In addition to the memoranda and agreements between the two countries, along the trajectory of close cooperation between Vietnam and South Korea, the two countries have also implemented several agreements and labor cooperation programs such as:

Korea-Vietnam Economic Cooperation Program (KOVECO): The KOVECO program is an economic cooperation program between South Korea and Vietnam aimed at promoting economic cooperation between the two countries. The program focuses on various areas such as trade, investment, technology, and infrastructure development. KOVECO provides financial support and consultancy services to businesses from both countries to facilitate the expansion of business operations and investment. Additionally, the program aims to promote cooperation in technology and research development, as well as sustainable infrastructure development in both countries. KOVECO has the potential to generate many economic and social benefits, including enhancing trade, creating employment opportunities, and improving the quality of life for people. Besides focusing on general economic cooperation, KOVECO also provides opportunities for Vietnamese workers to work in South Korea through recruitment and training programs.

Management and Development of Overseas Employment (MDOLE) Program: The MDOLE program is significant in managing and developing labor working abroad. Its main objective is to provide necessary services and support for Vietnamese workers when they work in other countries to ensure fair and safe working conditions. The program focuses on various aspects of labor management, including recruitment processes, training, pre- and post-deployment counseling, as well as addressing issues arising during work abroad. MDOLE also ensures that workers are trained and equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills for their jobs. Moreover, MDOLE supports the establishment of strong cooperation between Vietnam and recipient countries to facilitate and enhance the rights of Vietnamese workers. The program also emphasizes raising awareness and knowledge about labor rights and protection measures when working abroad. MDOLE plays a crucial role in ensuring the rights and safety of Vietnamese workers when working in other countries, contributing to creating a fair and sustainable working environment for them.

Employment Permit System (EPS) Program: The EPS program is established by the South Korean government to manage and administer work permits for foreign workers in South Korea. Its main goal is to provide employment opportunities for foreign workers in South Korea in industries and labor sectors with high demand while ensuring fair and safe working conditions for them. The EPS program applies an approval and licensing system based on the labor needs of businesses in South Korea. Foreign workers wishing to work in South Korea through EPS need to register and participate in the selection process, including competency assessments and technical requirements for each profession. EPS also

provides support and care for foreign workers when they arrive in South Korea, including language and cultural training programs, assistance in finding accommodation and medical issues, as well as resolving issues arising during work. Additionally, EPS ensures that foreign workers receive fair wages and working conditions in compliance with South Korean laws. The program also has control and monitoring measures to ensure compliance by both workers and employers. It can be said that the EPS program is an important mechanism to create work opportunities for foreign workers in South Korea while ensuring fair and safe working conditions for them. This is a government program of South Korea, aiming to recruit foreign workers in industries such as manufacturing, construction, and agriculture. It is also one of the important legal bases supporting Vietnamese workers in South Korea.

Labor Cooperation Agreement between the Ministry of Labor - Invalids and Social Affairs of Vietnam and the Ministry of Labor of South Korea: This is an official agreement between the labor ministries of the two countries aimed at enhancing cooperation and exchanging information on employment and labor management between the two countries. This agreement is an important step in promoting labor cooperation between the two countries. The agreement is signed with the main goal of creating favorable conditions for Vietnamese workers to work in South Korea, while ensuring their rights and fair and safe working conditions. The specific content of this agreement includes provisions and specific measures to protect the rights of Vietnamese workers and enhance cooperation between the two sides. Specifically, the agreement may include provisions on the selection process, training, and licensing for Vietnamese workers, as well as addressing protection and support measures for them when they arrive and work in South Korea. In addition, the agreement may address control and monitoring measures to ensure compliance by both workers and employers, as well as dispute resolution and handling issues arising during work. In summary, the labor cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Labor - Invalids and Social Affairs of Vietnam and the Ministry of Labor of South Korea is an important mechanism to enhance cooperation and protect the rights of Vietnamese workers when they work in South Korea.

4.2. The Outcomes of Labor Migration Flows

Occupational structure of Vietnamese and Korean migrant workers.

- **Vietnamese migrant workers in Korea**

In 2021, the number of new immigrants to South Korea decreased by 6.1% compared to 2020,

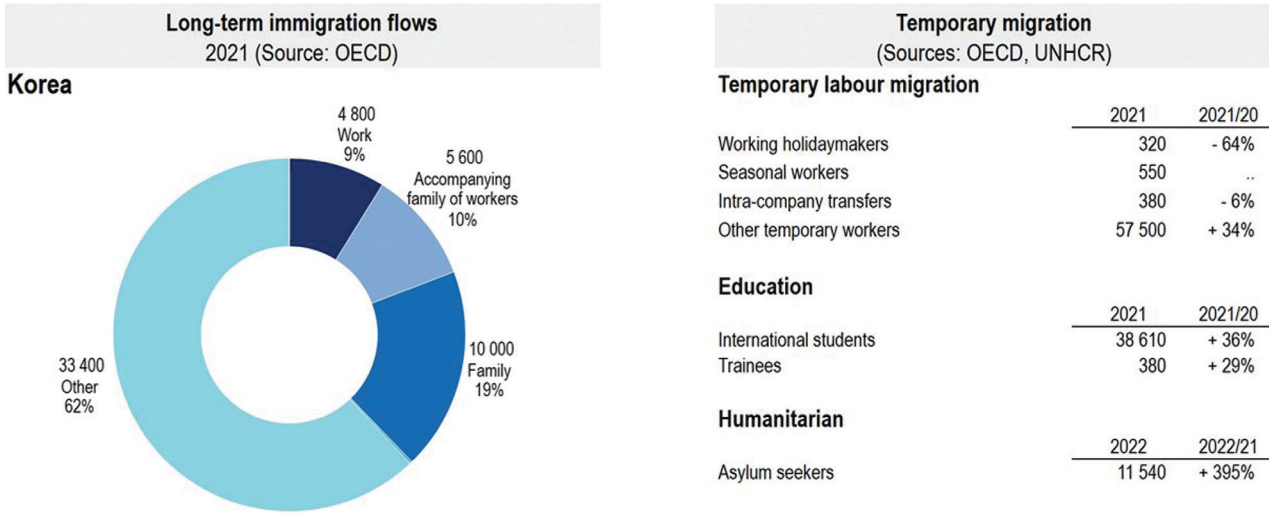


Figure 1. Temporal Evolution of the Composition of Foreign Migrant Workers in South Korea by Type
Source: OECD, 2023.

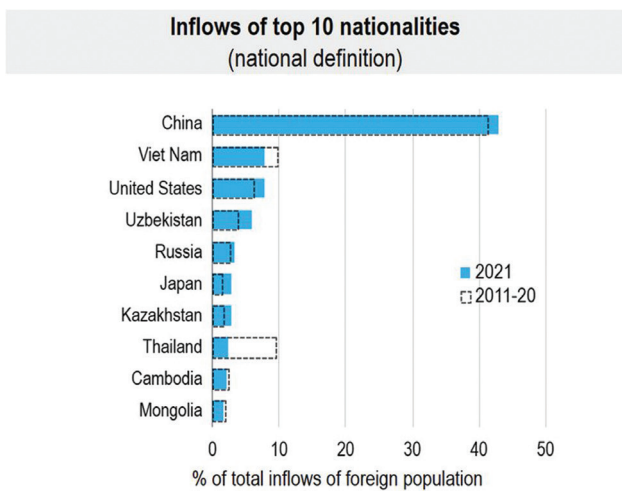


Figure 2. Ranking of the top 10 countries with the highest proportion of workers in South Korea
Source: OECD, 2023.

reaching 54,000 people. Among them, 8.8% were immigrant workers, 28.9% were family members (including accompanying family members), and 0.2% were humanitarian immigrants. Of these, about 39,000 permits were issued to international students at the university level and 59,000 to temporary and seasonal workers. Among them, Vietnam ranked second in terms of the proportion of immigrants to South Korea for labor purposes, following only China. As of May 2023, the number of Vietnamese labor immigrants in South Korea exceeded 23,000, with 19,228 working in the manufacturing sector, 343 in construction, 1,283 in agriculture, and 2,558 in fishing (OECD, 2023).

Based on data provided by the Ministry of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs of Vietnam, the demographic composition of Vietnamese labor migrants in South Korea exhibits distinct age group distributions, shaped by various contributing factors (OECD, 2023):

The age bracket spanning from 20 to 34 years old dominates, encompassing approximately 60-70% of the total Vietnamese workforce in South Korea. This demographic segment is characterized by robust health, dynamism, adaptability to novel work environments, and rapid learning capabilities.

Individuals aged between 35 and 49 represent about 25-30% of the workforce. This cohort typically boasts extensive work experience, advanced professional skills, and a level of maturity conducive to employment.

The age cohorts under 20 and over 50 constitute a relatively minor share, accounting for approximately 5-10%.

The composition of age groups among Vietnamese labor migrants in South Korea is heavily influenced by several pivotal factors, including the demand for labor in South Korea, Vietnam’s policies on labor export, and the economic conditions and standards of living in South Korea.

Primarily, South Korea’s demand for labor in sectors such as heavy industries, manufacturing, agriculture, and services accentuates the significance of the 20-49 age group. Individuals within this range typically exhibit robust health and high labor capacity, rendering them preferential candidates in the recruitment process.

Secondly, Vietnam’s policies on labor export, particularly those outlined by governmental directives, incentivize young adults to pursue employment opportunities abroad, notably in South Korea. Consequently, this has bolstered the representation of youthful labor migrants within the Vietnamese workforce in South Korea.

Lastly, economic incentives and living standards in South Korea serve as significant determinants. The

comparatively higher wages and job benefits in South Korea attract many Vietnamese workers, particularly those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, seeking to enhance their income and living conditions for themselves and their families.

Nevertheless, future trends pertaining to the age composition of Vietnamese labor migrants in South Korea are subject to various influencing factors:

Changes in Vietnam’s domestic population structure may emerge as a pivotal determinant. Presently, the declining proportion of young individuals within Vietnam’s working-age demographic, juxtaposed with the increasing share of elderly citizens, may potentially reduce the influx of young labor migrants to South Korea in the future.

Additionally, shifts in South Korea’s labor demands will exert considerable influence. As South Korea pivots towards advancing high-tech industries, the demand for skilled labor with advanced technical proficiency is anticipated to rise. Consequently, South Korea may increasingly seek Vietnamese workers with elevated qualifications, particularly in fields such as information technology, electronics, and other high-tech sectors.

Lastly, the formulation of governmental policies in Vietnam holds the potential to decisively shape the age composition of Vietnamese labor migrants in South Korea. Policy interventions aimed at either incentivizing or restricting labor exports could significantly impact the preferences and trends within the labor force in the foreseeable future.

In conclusion, the age distribution of Vietnamese labor migrants in South Korea is poised for potential shifts driven by factors including demographic changes, shifts in labor demand, and governmental policies. This underscores the imperative for adaptive observation and policy responses from stakeholders and policymakers alike.

• **Korean Expatriates in Vietnam: A Case Study of Ho Chi Minh City**

In contrast, the emigration of Korean citizens to OECD countries experienced an 11% decline in 2021, amounting to 37,000 individuals. Among them, 33% migrated to the United States, 22% to Canada, and 8% to Germany (OECD, 2023). Specifically, in Vietnam, recent data from the Ministry of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs of Vietnam, as of April 2024, indicates the presence of 27,347 Korean workers across various locations including Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Dong Nai province, among others. This diagram below encompasses 3,766 Korean workers who have repatriated but not yet resumed employment. Occupationally, these workers include 12,911 specialists,

2,997 technical workers, 6,033 managers, and 5,406 executive directors.

Ho Chi Minh City hosts 1,323 foreign-invested enterprises out of a national total of 2,995, constituting 44.1% of the country’s total (Ministry of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs, 2022). Furthermore, there are 4,333 foreign workers officially licensed and employed in Vietnam (Ministry of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs, 2022). Among this cohort, individuals from East Asian nations such as China, South Korea, and Japan are prevalent.

A real-life survey conducted within the Korean community in Ho Chi Minh City, involving 136 participants (N=136), reveals a gender-balanced distribution with 54% male and 46% female respondents. Participants represent a broad age spectrum ranging from 15 to 65 years old, with the 25 to 34 age group exhibiting the highest level of participation, as illustrated in the subsequent chart.

According to the survey results, the age group 25–34 accounts for the highest proportion (45%), followed by the 35–44 age group (27%), indicating that South Korean workers in Vietnam are predominantly young, dynamic, skilled, and experienced. This aligns not only with Vietnam’s labor immigration policies, such as the 2020 Law on Entry, Exit, Transit, and Residence of Foreigners, but also with the push and pull dynamics of international labor migration. The push factors from South Korea include domestic labor market competition, high living costs, and the need to explore broader economic opportunities. In contrast, the pull factors from Vietnam consist of immigration-friendly policies, abundant business opportunities, and a dynamic work environment, particularly in industries requiring high levels of expertise. Labor permit regulations, such as Circular No. 22/2019/TT-BLĐTBXH, serve as a mechanism to ensure that foreign workers meet technical and skill standards, further enhancing Vietnam’s attractiveness to highly skilled professionals.

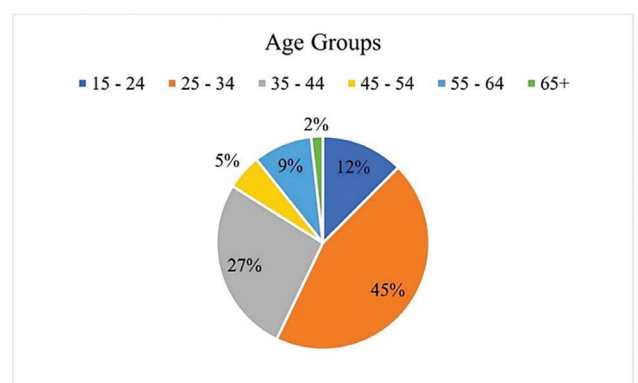


Diagram 1. Valid Percent of Age Groups.
 Source: Primary data processed, November 2023 - January 2024.

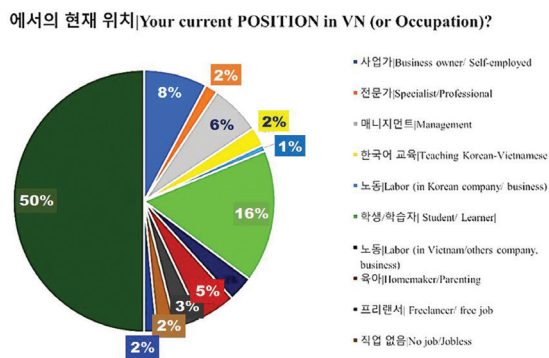


Diagram 2. Valid Percent of Occupation
 Source: Primary data processed, November 2023 - January 2024.

Regarding the professional composition, the Korean population in the city predominantly involves itself in self-employment, constituting 50% of the demographic, especially within the age bracket of 25-34. Approximately 16% of individuals are enrolled in overseas studies or training programs within Vietnam. The third most prominent occupational group consists of managers and employees affiliated with South Korean enterprises, with the remaining populace dispersed among diverse sectors.

The survey results reveal that 50% of South Korean workers in Ho Chi Minh City are engaged in self-employment, primarily in the service, trade, and retail sectors, while 16% are pursuing education or participating in training programs. A significant proportion comprises managers and professionals associated with South Korean enterprises, reflecting the demand for highly skilled labor in various industrial sectors. These characteristics can be analyzed through the push and pull theory of labor migration. Push factors from South Korea include domestic labor market pressures and the need to explore international business opportunities. Conversely, pull factors from Vietnam stem from its supportive policies for foreign workers, such as Decree No. 70/2023/ND-CP, which clearly stipulates working conditions and social insurance provisions. Additionally, Ho Chi Minh City's dynamic economy, characterized by diverse business opportunities and competitive costs, has created favorable conditions to attract South Korean entrepreneurs and professionals to live and work in the city.

4.3. Policies to Promote and Support International Labor Migration in Vietnam

Supportive and Regulatory Framework

The regulatory framework governing labor migration includes the Labor Code of 2019 and Law No. 23/2023/QH15, which introduces amendments and supplements. The Labor Code of 2019 outlines regulations for

overseeing foreign workers in Vietnam, encompassing aspects like wages, social insurance, and working conditions. Law No. 23/2023/QH15 focuses on modifying entry, residence, and work procedures for foreigners in Vietnam, along with provisions on work permits and residence durations.

Furthermore, Decree No. 70/2023/NĐ-CP provides guidance for implementing specific provisions of labor laws, particularly those concerning employment for foreign workers. This decree also elaborates on regulations pertaining to employment, wages, and insurance for foreign workers.

Management and Procedural Guidelines for Foreign Workers: The management and procedures related to foreign workers are governed by Circular No. 22/2019/TT-BLĐTBXH, which delineates the requisite knowledge and skills upon completion of technical programs, along with directives for issuing work permits.

In practice, effective management of foreign workers necessitates meticulous attention from businesses to ensure comprehensive adherence to legal regulations, with particular emphasis on compliance with Decree No. 70/2023/NĐ-CP. Businesses are also obliged to furnish comprehensive reports on the utilization of foreign labor to labor management authorities. In the implementation of management measures, it is imperative to ascertain the work location, the authority responsible for issuing permits, and to enforce penalties for violations as deemed necessary.

Policies for Regulating Free Migration

Vietnam has established policies to regulate foreign migration, aiming to safeguard national security, uphold social order, and protect national interests. This policy framework encompasses a plethora of legal instruments, including laws, decrees, and circulars, addressing matters related to immigration, residency, employment, and education of foreigners in Vietnam.

Key legislation such as the Immigration, Emigration, Residency, and Nationality Law of 2020 and the Law on Foreigners in Vietnam of 2014 delineate the foundational principles and regulations governing the migration and residency of foreigners. These laws, in conjunction with the Labor Code of 2019 and the Education Law of 2019, provide the statutory framework for overseeing the employment and education of foreigners in Vietnam. Furthermore, the Investment Law of 2020 outlines conditions and regulations pertaining to foreign investment in Vietnam.

Decrees such as Decree 17-CP, 49-NĐCP, 64-NĐCP, and 108-NĐCP offer specific guidance on the implementation of provisions within laws concerning immigration and residency of foreigners. Circulars

issued by ministries and agencies, such as Circular 01/2022/TT-BCA and Circular 25/2019/TT-LBTBXH, serve to complement and furnish detailed instructions on procedures and specific conditions for granting permits and administering immigration, residency, employment, and education of foreigners.

Inter-ministerial regulations promulgated by agencies including the Ministry of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs; the Ministry of Education and Training; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and the Ministry of Public Security aim to bolster integration and ensure more stringent management of immigration and foreign labor. These policies not only safeguard national security but also foster Vietnam's economic growth and international collaboration. Nonetheless, policies undergo continuous refinement and adaptation to align with evolving trends in international cooperation, all while maintaining security and oversight by state management agencies over foreign labor participating in Vietnam's labor market.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of labor migration between Vietnam and South Korea highlights the pivotal role of policy frameworks in facilitating international labor flows while addressing challenges related to labor market demands, demographic transitions, and socio-economic integration. Policy measures in both nations have played a crucial role in fostering a balanced and well-regulated labor environment that protects workers' rights and promotes bilateral cooperation. Vietnam's legal and regulatory frameworks, including the 2019 Labor Code and Decree No. 70/2023/ND-CP, have laid a strong foundation for managing foreign labor, with a focus on ensuring fair wages, social insurance coverage, and safe working conditions. Similarly, South Korea's initiatives, such as the Employment Permit System (EPS), provide a systematic approach to integrating foreign workers into key industries. Nonetheless, challenges persist in ensuring full compliance with these policies, particularly for self-employed individuals and those working in informal sectors.

In the era of globalization, which continues to accelerate international labor migration, Vietnam and South Korea must adopt adaptive and forward-looking strategies to address emerging challenges. These include evolving labor market demands driven by technological advancements and demographic shifts in both countries. By proactively refining labor migration policies, both nations can maximize the socio-economic benefits of international labor migration while reinforcing their strategic partnership in the global economy.

This study underscores the imperative of harmonizing labor migration management with broader socio-economic development objectives. Such efforts are essential to ensuring sustainable, long-term benefits for migrant workers, host economies, and bilateral relations between Vietnam and South Korea.

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Khanh Thi Lan Ta, born in Vietnam in 1981, is a dedicated scholar with a strong academic and professional background. She holds a Master's degree, earned in 2014, and is currently pursuing her PhD at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities – Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City.



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