

Impact of Immigrant Migration on Local Populations

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Abstract: Illegal immigrant issues are now the centre of discussions nationwide and among contentious issues in Malaysia and the State of Sabah. An influx of foreign immigrants to Malaysia has various impacts on the local community. This study aims to examine the view of local people on the economic and social impacts of the migration of legal and illegal immigrants to Kota Kinabalu. A qualitative approach was employed to conduct a one-to-one interview that involved eight informants from the community of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Sabah, Kota Kinabalu Branch. They consist of academic staff, non-academic staff, and students. 10 questions were developed based on previous literature reviews. The results show that the arrival of immigrants to Sabah has an economic, social, and environmental impact on the locals. The results were acquired through a conventional thematic analysis that has been applied in this study. The immigrants become dominant competitors to the locals in terms of job opportunities, particularly in agriculture, small business, and construction. Social impact triggers issues of crime rate, security threat, cultural influence, size of population, and social dilemma. Moreover, new findings collected from the interview session included the environmental impact related to the squatters' sanitation, which may develop a negative perception among tourists. Policymakers and related government agencies should also take the necessary action to prevent the impact from spreading seriously among the locals.

Keywords: immigrants, economic, social, impact, local people

Introduction

According to Blakemore (2019), migration has been happening for decades, and the earliest migrants were said to have originated from the African continent. People worldwide have continued to engage in it as a phenomenon. In 2019, the number of international migrants that are residing in a country other than their birth country reached almost 272 million, and the resided countries mostly consist of Asia, Europe, America, and Africa (United Nations, n.d.). Southeast Asia is one of the countries that is most populated by immigrants, with an estimated 26.6 million of them outside their country of origin. Malaysia has become one of the destinations for immigrants, which consists mostly of Indonesians and Filipinos, which can be seen especially in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah (Ernst, 2022). Sabah, formerly known as North Borneo, has attracted immigrants throughout history due to its diverse culture, strategic location, and historical significance. This trend of migration predates the colonial era. Importing foreigners during the colonial period to work in the state was highly needed to help accelerate the state's economy. The purpose of their migration to Sabah comes with different reasons, such as reasons of civil war in the Southern Philippines and to come out of poverty in their own country (Kassim, 2009).

Filipinos have been in Sabah for the past three decades, and they were divided into three categories: refugees, economic migrants, and illegal immigrants (Kassim, 2009). Moreover, the total number of Filipino immigrants that have been staying in Sabah since the 1970s is now said to reach 136,055 people, where they will be given an identification document to be used in handling these immigrants in the future (Berita Harian, 2024). On the other hand, Indonesian migration to Malaysia started in the late nineteenth century when Javanese labourers were taken to maintain British capitalist economic enterprises through the “Dutch Contract,” which is also applicable to Sabah (Syed Mahadi, 2014). Since then, North Borneo has become the major port for barter trading from Sulawesi, Maluku, and Java Island in the 14th to 18th centuries (Syed Mahadi, 2014). However, in current times, agriculture and construction are the industries most pursued by immigrants, as well as the “3D” industries that are known as “Dirty, Difficult and Dangerous” (Narudin, 2024). Furthermore, in Sabah, massive populations of immigrants are alarming and still rising despite the hurdles and endless procedures that they face to enter our country (Kassim, 2009). According to the Sabah Police Commissioner, Datuk Juteh Dikun, there are currently 538 squatter colonies in Sabah that serve as refuges for migrants and illegal immigrants (Santos, 2024). Hence, this study aims to get insights into the effect of immigrants’ migration in Kota Kinabalu on local people. Sabah is becoming one of the most chosen destinations by immigrants, as Sabah is generally strategically located between two countries, which are Indonesia and the Philippines.

For years, Kota Kinabalu has been a hub for immigrants, who can be observed living alongside the local population. The state government is regulating the migration of immigrants to this state by enforcing laws specifically designed for immigrants. These laws include the Immigration Act 1959/63 (Act 155), the Passport Act 1966 (Act 150), the Immigration Regulations 1963, and the Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act 2007 (Act 670). Therefore, in order for immigrants to remain or work in this state, they must abide by the rules that the government has established through these laws. The Sabah Immigration Department has also performed operations of deportation or repatriation for illegal immigrants, where they are sent back to their countries. Deputy Home Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Shamsul Anuar Nasarah emphasised that the Sabah Immigration Department had deported 9,938 illegal immigrants between March 2021 and March 2023 (Bernama, 2023). With a total of 1.2 million illegal immigrants, Sabah has the highest number in Malaysia, with Tawau having the highest number at 180,000, followed by Sandakan and Kota Kinabalu (Miwil, 2020). Besides that, Datuk Ewon Benedick, United Progressive Kinabalu Organisation (UPKO) president, has also stated that the presence of the Filipinos could pose security risk threats to Sabahan, as it already happened before and in Kota Kinabalu, stateless children can be seen disturbing cars on the road asking for money (The Vibes, 2022). The syndicate smuggled in illegal immigrants and immigrants trafficking, especially Filipinos, with a payment ranging between RM1,500 and RM2,500 per person, also contributing to the explosion of immigrants in Sabah (Miwil, 2024). The increasing immigrant population in Sabah has raised concern for the state government, as they may, in the future, outnumber the locals in Sabah. Some of the social problems that are occurring in Kota Kinabalu have also been said to be due to illegal immigrants, such as the rising crime rate and the spread of diseases (Ng, 2002). During a session of the Sabah Legislative Assembly, Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor stated that foreigners accounted for 23.7%, or 810,433 individuals, out of Sabah's total population of 3,418,785, as reported in the initial 2020 population and housing census (Vanar, 2022). Hence, this demonstrates that the issue lies in the need to examine the effects of the growing influx of immigrants who specifically choose Kota Kinabalu as their destination, regardless of whether they possess a valid permit or not, and despite the ongoing efforts and measures implemented by the government.

Most importantly, this study addresses the social, economic, and environmental impacts that immigrants bring with them to their destination country. Ultimately, to find the answers to this study’s problem, the questions arise: “Does the migration of immigrants to Kota Kinabalu have an impact on the local people?”, “Does the migration of immigrants have an economic impact on the local people?” and “Does the migration of immigrants have a social impact on the local people?”.

Literature Review

Impact of migration towards the local people

Despite the love and hate affairs, the immigrant's involvement in contributing to the enormous economic development of the state matters. Their involvement in the industries of construction, agriculture, timber, fisheries, and domestic sectors is inherently dominant (Hassan et al., 2010). The large inflow of illegal immigrants into Sabah is due to the existence of syndicates smuggling foreigners in to work on oil palm plantations. Certain individuals were afforded protection by locals who exploited them for inexpensive labour and even provided them with identification cards (Miwil, 2020). Demand for labour on plantations has further become a pull factor for employed immigrants in Sabah. Even the United Nations suggests the government of Sabah consider the large number of immigrants in Sabah as an opportunity for transforming the state (Miwil, 2024). Economic factors are one of the main contributing reasons for the increase in the number of illegal immigrants in Sabah. In 2014, Chief Secretary to the Government, Tan Sri Dr Ali Hamsa, announced the Royal Commission of Inquiry on Illegal Immigrants in Sabah, where it was revealed that the huge influx of illegal immigrants to the state from 1978 onwards, was caused by stark economic disparities between the Southern Philippines, Indonesia, and Sabah. The terrible economic scenario around that time in the affected parts of the Philippines and Indonesia provided the push factor for people to migrate to Sabah. During that period, Sabah was experiencing growth and advancement. There were ample job opportunities in most sectors, and it was politically stable and progressive (New Straits Times, 2014). Furthermore, Sitompul (2023) asserts that remittances are crucial to the economies of developing countries. More than 60% of all remittances are received in developing countries, where the amount constitutes the most income for the countries (Sukamdi, 2004, as cited by Sitompul, 2023). Hernandez-Coss (2008 as cited by Sitompul, 2023), claimed that the volume of remittances from Southeast Asia in 2005 was five times higher than the amount of formal development assistance, supports this claim. Next, it is estimated that if the reformation of immigration, including the legalisation of undocumented immigrants, were undertaken, it would increase federal expenses as there would be additional expenditure on social security, healthcare, and other benefits for the immigrants (CBO, 2006 as cited by Ratha et al., 2011).

Hassan et al., (2010) mentioned that there is always one bitter fact about the discussion about the locals and the immigrants; the locals need them, but at the same time, they detest them. One of the aspects that cannot be isolated when discussing the threat these immigrants pose to the security of Sabah. There are plenty of illegal activities that are happening in the area where they are staying; syabu smuggling and distribution, prostitution, fake documents, money syndicates, smuggling of goods and arms from neighbouring countries, and nuisance in the eyes of the locals (Hassan et al., 2010). In the latest article by Ahsan (2021), it is also stated that the high proportion of immigrants has led to a drastic escalation of crimes. In Sabah, the influx of immigrants has contributed to various social problems. In fact, the issue of immigrants in Sabah has been a long-standing one since the 1970s (Gunggut et al., 2006, as cited by Anwar & Gunggut, 2012). Ever since they arrived in the state, they have always been associated with crimes. As a result, the locals may perceive immigrants negatively, which causes them fear or anxiety about their safety. Their squatter colonies; are areas that are inhabited by the poor and have no access to their own land (Srinivas, 2022). According to Miwil (2024), there are currently 285 colonies in Sabah that comprise 33,566 houses, housing 130,397 people. The areas are dirty and filthy due to improper sanitation, which may cause the spread of epidemic diseases. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a total of eight squatter colonies throughout Sabah, including Kota Kinabalu, had been identified as places where the outbreak of the coronavirus started (Asmin, 2020).

Another impact is in terms of cultural movement (Castles & Miller, 2009, as cited by Ratha et al., 2011). Successful assimilation to the country of destination requires the migrants to interact with the new society while keeping the culture of their origin country alive, resulting in a positive environment for multicultural identity (Faist & Gerdes, 2008; Guarnizo et. al., 2003). For instance, the Filipino market in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, offers a variety of foods, jewellery, handicrafts, and clothing from the Philippines (Metro News, 2022) and the showcasing of Kababayan culture through Filipino dances, songs, and food at the Kababayan Cultural Arts & Food (Obon, 2022).

Functionalist Migration Theory

This study utilises the functionalist migration theory to identify the factors influencing immigrants' migration. It employs the push and pull model, which addresses the disparities in income and opportunities between immigrants' origin and their destination (Haas, 2021). This is said because the theory sees migration as a phenomenon of productivity and equality in origin and destination societies, which is a strategy of using migration to access a higher and more secure source of income (Haas, 2021). Hence, the push and pull model will explain the factors of migration based on this theory, which is then used to identify the impact that comes with it.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study was developed based on a previous literature review. The impacts of the migration of immigrants to Sabah fall under two main aspects, i.e., economic impacts and social impacts, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Impact of Immigrants' Migration Conceptual Framework

| Impact of Immigrants' Migration |
|--|
| <p>Economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dominant involvement in industries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Remittances ● Increase of federal expenses <p>Social</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Security threat ● Spread of epidemic disease ● Cultural movement |

Methodology

Research Design

This is a qualitative study where the data are collected through one-on-one interviews with the local people who have been impacted by the immigrants' migration. A qualitative study has its own advantages, one of which is that it provides a detailed description of the informants' opinions, experiences, and feelings (Rahman, 2017). Hence, by using a qualitative study and choosing Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, as a case study, the researchers were able to get an understanding of the effect of the migration of immigrants on local people. Moreover, the research design is also said to be descriptive as it studies a pattern in a specific group, that is, the local people's opinion towards the impact of immigrants' migration to Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.

Unit of Analysis

This research aims to study the local people's opinions towards the migration of immigrants to Kota Kinabalu. Hence, the unit of analysis of this research is the individuals that are the academic staff, non-academic staff, and undergraduate students of UiTM Sabah, Kota Kinabalu branch. This study takes place around the campus area of UiTM Kota Kinabalu, as that is where the informants will be most of the time. The UiTM community was chosen as a representative sample due to their proximity to Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, and their direct exposure to the impact of immigrants. According to Kassim (2009), there have been many studies conducted on Filipino migrants among academic staff and

students, and their discussion focuses on the Filipinos who live in 'Kampung Air', which consists of a mixture of refugees, illegal immigrants, and legal workers. Therefore, this suggested that we conduct our study by interviewing the students and academic staff as well as the non-academic staff, as they would provide us with a variety of information, opinions, ideas, and perspectives on immigrants that would also enhance our input for this study.

Sample Size

UiTM Cawangan Sabah (2023) reported that UiTM Kota Kinabalu has a total of 441 staff members, including both academic and non-academic staff. Additionally, the number of students enrolled at UiTM Kota Kinabalu is 4,643. Thus, the total population of people in UiTM Kota Kinabalu is 5,084 individuals. According to Baker & Edwards (n.d.), relatively few participants, such as between six to twelve, may provide researchers with more insights that are immensely valuable and represent adequate numbers for research. Hence, in this research, there are eight informants, which consist of academic staff (4 informants), non-academic staff (2 informants), and undergraduate students (3 informants) within the age range of 21 to 47.

Sampling Technique

In this study, non-probability sampling, known as purposive sampling, was applied. Purposive sampling is a technique typically applied in qualitative studies to identify and select information for the most effective use of limited resources (Patton, 2002, as cited by Palinkas et al., 2015). Both academic and non-academic staff, and undergraduate students were specifically chosen for this study because they are Sabahans and can represent the opinions of locals in Sabah. The Research Ethics Committee of UiTM recommends that researchers replace the informants from the local Sabahan community residing in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, with members of the UiTM community in order to address sensitivity concerns.

Measurement

In order to answer the research objective, semi-structured interviews were conducted. The semi-structured interview is the most suitable method for collecting qualitative data. It involves a series of open-ended questions and provides opportunities for both the interviewer and interviewee to discuss some topics more in detail. It can also go deeply into personal and sometimes sensitive matters that can be good new information (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019; Mathers et al., 1998). It allows for flexibility in answering questions and permits informant viewpoints to be explored (Daae & Boks, 2015, as cited by Mohtar et al., 2021). Table 2 in Appendix 1 shows the list of questions posted to the eight selected informants.

Data Collection

For this study, primary data was collected through face-to-face interviews. Prior to conducting the interviews, researchers developed a set of questions divided into two sections, along with an interview protocol. This set of questions received approval from the Research Ethics Committee (REC) of UiTM Sabah Branch. The interview dates were scheduled after contacting the informants. Before starting the interview sessions, informants were provided with an interview protocol that included a consent form, ensuring their participation was voluntary. The confidentiality of the data was also assured to the informants. All interviews were recorded to capture every piece of data. The ethical procedures involved obtaining approval from the REC. Researchers submitted several forms (BREC 2, 3, and 4) along with the interview questions. The proposed research topic was reviewed and approved first by the faculty-level REC and subsequently by the REC of UiTM Sabah Branch. After making the necessary amendments suggested by the reviewers, final approval was obtained on November 17, 2023. The interviews with eight informants were conducted between November 21, 2023, and January 9, 2024.

Data Analysis

The data in this study is analysed using the conventional method of thematic analysis, saturation of data and also translation methodology.

Findings

Interview was conducted to examine the informants view on economic and social impact of migration of immigrants to Sabah. The researchers managed to collect various opinions both positive and negative, from informants on the impact of immigrants' arrival in Sabah.

Economic

There are several responses by informants on the economic impact of the migration of Filipino and Indonesian immigrants to Sabah. They seem to be dominant in certain sectors, such as the plantation sector, construction, and small business. This scenario creates competition between local people and immigrants to earn money for living, especially in the areas of plantations, businesses, estates and fisheries.

Dominant Involvement in Industries

Local people are unhappy with the involvement of Filipino immigrants as business operators at "Pasar Kraftangan Kraftangan Kota Kinabalu," popularly known as the Philippines Market, and the Kota Kinabalu Fish Market. Their concerns are detailed below.

"Pasar Kraftangan and the fish market are conquered by them, so all our locals conduct business at other districts like Pasar Tamu and things like that." – R02

"Rasanya tidak sepatutnya dorang yang sepenuhnya disitu sebab dorang bukan local tapi mungkin ada jalan dan peluang untuk yang local people berniaga disana. Mungkin boleh disama ratakan, bukan sepenuhnya didominasi oleh imigran." – R08

"For example, Pasar Kraftangan most of the West Malaysian they know this as Pasar Filipina, so, we can see how dominant these people." – R07

The immigrants appear to dominate the workforce in several sectors, including construction, agriculture, estates, seaweed cultivation, oil palm production, fishing, transportation, and business.

"3D. 3D yang saya bilang tadi tu. Construction, labour, agriculture, services." – R03

Competition

The existence of immigrants in Sabah creates stiff competition for local people to be employed in the industry conquered by them. This scenario affects the ability of locals to get jobs or create business opportunities.

"Negative economic impact in terms of competitionlah. Competition in the sense of now we have 1.2 million unemployed people. So, what kind of competition? Labour force. Ada persaingan lah dan syarikat syarikat especially kalau estate, you go to estate kebanyakannya immigrant tu. So, they will take this kind of people." – R04

“In terms of the economy impact kalau kita tengok sendiri dorang banyak buka macam kedai-kedai begitu kan So, itu salah satu dia akan menjadi competition towards the local people whenever they want to apa.. open their business and so on.” – R05

“But the bad thing is, we ourselves will be affected in term of competition. It will compete with our people as we know, they, the immigrant is really good in fish market based on their background in the Philippines and also in term of kraftangan. And I think eh in term of competition, it really affects us especially in local industry.” – R06

Social Impact

The immigrants also play a role in contributing to the social impact on local people in Sabah. Being both the sending and the receiving country, Malaysia generally and Sabah specifically has no choice but to deal with the issue of immigrants and the impacts of their existence (Hassan et al., 2010). The informants have raised concerns about the social impacts of security threats, crime rates, cultural influence, population size, and social dilemmas.

Security Threat

Security threats arise not only from state actors but also from non-state actors, such as immigrants. The influx of immigrants can impact state security, particularly if they become more dominant than the local population. This dominance can make local people feel threatened in their own state.

“Yes, definitely. The social impact covering for safety for locals and not just for locals lah, it impacted the country itself because the dominance number like I said it was on the dangerous level. 30 percent, if it exceeded or get higher than that, then that itself can lead to the threat to the safety of the state.” – R01

“Even the locals they are not feeling secure to be in their own place. So, I think this is very common feelings of the local especially in the east side of the state. Kalau di KK ni pun we can see even the Filipinos, the stateless children especially contoh, when you dekat area depan Imago, Wisma, AIA, when you stop at the red traffic, there will be someone knocking on your window asking for money. I think that is not safe la especially when you’re a lady driver. Anything could happen to you.” – R07

Increase of Crime Rate

Local people believe that immigrants partly contribute to the crime rates in Sabah, particularly in Kota Kinabalu. They think that a shortage of income and lack of job opportunities lead some immigrants to engage in illegal activities such as theft, drug trafficking, smuggling, and other crimes, creating a sense of insecurity among the locals. This belief is supported by responses from informants.

“We don’t give them education so they will create a lot of social problem. Maybe crime boleh berlaku. If they don’t have proper work because they didn’t have proper document to get money, they will do crime.” – R04

“Secondly, of course the negative side especially I’m referring to the stateless, illegal immigrant, without any proper document, it’s quite hard for them to work. No one will hire them. As a result of that, how they are going to survive? So, I think the crime in the state would be high because of them. How are you going to survive? Kalau tidak ada kerja, no gaji and end up dalam keadaan terdesak, you’re desperate, you willing to do something which is in contravention with the law.” – R07

“One thing is crime rate, drugs trafficking, itu yang kita risau. Macam di depan UITM ni terkenal dengan syabu.” – R07

“Such as drugs. I think guns are not relevant in this. Smuggling cigarettes and also, maybe they are hiding criminals there, we don’t know that.” – R06

Cultural Influence

One significant cultural influence on the local people is the integration of languages and mixed marriages. Parents and locals are concerned about the potential for romantic relationships between their children and foreigners, fearing it could lead to conflicts within families.

“The immigrants do have social impact on local people in term of, hold on ya. In term of family relationship. It stated that the teenagers, the kids or women insecure feeling among the parents because eh the foreigner immigrants they believe that they can influence their children to trouble between family members especially when their teenagers are having an affair with the foreigners.” – R06

“Of course, number one is mixed marriage. That’s the diversity of our country, we appreciate that because especially Sabahan, we are very open because we welcome people to come to our state. They can even speak Bahasa. I think those are some of the factors contributing to I don’t know is it migration or temporarily...” – R07

Size of Population

Singh (2023) mentioned in a newspaper article, that the Sabah State government believes the number of illegal immigrants and stateless foreigners is about 800,000, while others suggested that the number may reach up to 1.1 million illegal immigrants, stateless adults, including children in Sabah. However, the exact number of immigrants in Sabah varies, as there is neither accurate data nor information on this matter.

“I think the existence of immigrants in Sabah are quite out of control as currently Sabah itself has the population of approximately 3.3 million and what was shared to us is that currently there are about 1.1 millions of immigrants in Sabah which resulted in almost 30 percent of the population of Sabah and that is actually at a dangerous level.” – R02

“The immigrants have been in our state for few decades since 1970s and 1980s because of you know the conflict at Philippine and Indonesia so they came to our state for searching a better life. And looking at current situation, I think the number of immigrants in Sabah has been increasing and in fact in one of article, recently I read, a total of immigrants in Sabah is like 1/3 of our population. So, to sum up the number is growing from year to year.”- R06

Social Dilemma on the Acceptance of Immigrants

The local population has a mixed attitude towards the immigrant community. While they acknowledge their contribution to the economic development of Sabah, they also harbour a strong dislike for their presence. This has resulted in negative consequences for both the locals and the state, including security threats and a negative perception of tourists.

“Of course, lah not. Because actually kalau dorang masuk secara legal I don’t have issue with them, but the issue is when they are actually entering illegally into our state...” – R05

“My opinion that would be 50-50 because we do welcome investors, expatriates to invest. Those are also considered as immigrant right. I think well accepted by people of course when they are giving the surplus, I mean the benefits.” – R07

“Partially because all these immigrants, they are from Indonesia, Filipinos and some other countries right. So, our locals pun ada bangsa yang sama so I think when you have to look

towards their race. Yes, they will be welcomed towards dorang punya race masing-masing. Tapi, interms of locals yang bukan dari bangsa yang sama ataupun kurang menerima terhadap pendatang asing yang semakin ramai ni, I think not so much.” – R02

Environmental

The presence of many immigrants is one of the concerns faced by the State of Sabah, as the inundation of immigrants also causes an increased number of squatters.

Squatters Sanitation

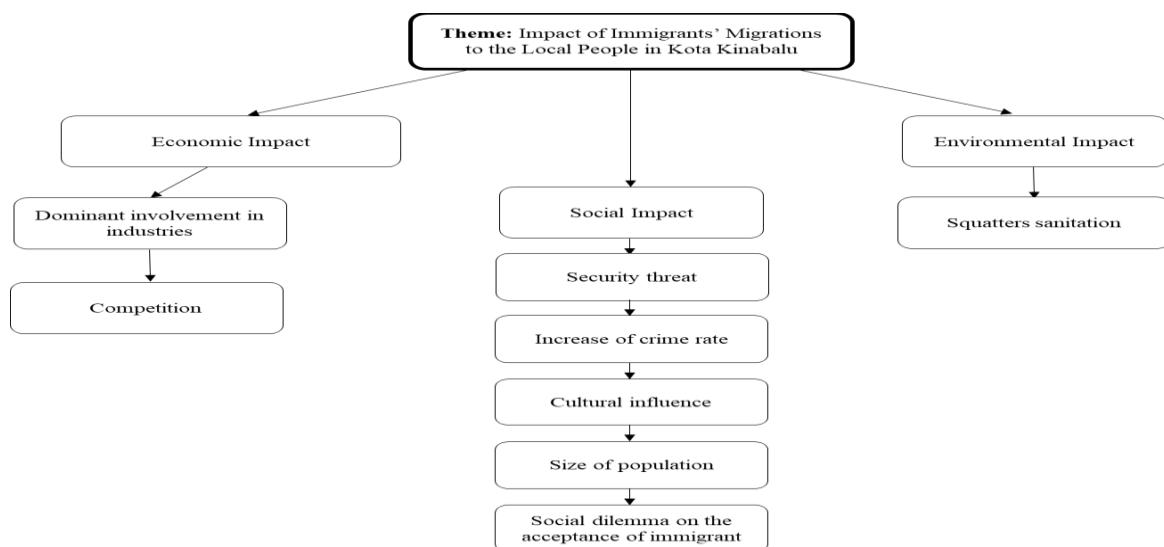
The issue of squatters is not a new phenomenon in Malaysia (Kuek, 2016). It has become alarming in many major cities, including Kota Kinabalu, where most of these settlements are sited on government lands while others are on private land (Manap, 2001). It has been described as an incubator with the potential to cause an outbreak of contagious disease and the locals perceived them as eyesores damaging the environment and their quality of life (Daily Express, 2014). According to the literature, the informants expressed dissatisfaction with the presence of squatters due to the negative impact they have on the environment, such as pollution and the degradation of the state's aesthetic appeal. Additionally, the informants believed that squatters contribute to a negative perception among tourists.

“Demographically, I think it doesn’t make Sabah pretty. houses. Personally, I don’t think it look nice and environmental wise, I think pollution lah. They cause a lot of pollution towards persisiran tu and it dia mengeluarkan satu odours so it discomforts towards the local who live nearby or move around living nearby or doing business nearby.” – R02

“First, of course it can affect our beauty. Of course, it gives bad perception towards our tourist and our tourism industry itself. Eh it gives, what we call it, bad perception to our community.” – R06

The research framework depicted in Figure 1 illustrates the impact of immigrants' migrations on the local population in Kota Kinabalu. This framework comprises three variables: economic and social impacts, as previously identified in the literature. Additionally, informants have contributed a new variable: environmental impact. This addition is considered the novelty of the study, introducing a fresh perspective on the subject.

Figure 1. Research Framework on the Impact of Immigrants’ Migrations on Local Population



Conclusion

In essence, these thoughts and findings aim to deepen our understanding of the origins of immigrants in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. The study's implications extend to providing society with an overview of the impacts of immigrant migration to Sabah. Furthermore, it serves as a valuable reference for future researchers, particularly those interested in exploring similar topics. Additionally, policymakers stand to gain insight into the effects of immigrant presence in the state.

Suggestions for Future Research

The implication that arises from this study for future researchers is that they need to do more research related to immigration issues. This is said because further research about immigrants on their factors of migration, migration impacts and suggestions to reduce the impacts will give more data and insights from various groups to the state government and responsible authorities in tackling the issues of immigrants. According to Barrero and Yalaz (2018), researchers could contribute to “evidence-based policy making” in which policymakers make use of the evidence from research in designing, implementing policies or decision making. This then becomes the source for these policymakers to take action on addressed issues, especially in terms of the rights of the locals and the immigrants, where these need to be stated in detail. Policy formulation should take into account the employment rights, rights to establish businesses, rights to education, and rights to healthcare services of immigrants. Thus, we recommend that future researchers expand the scope of their study to encompass the entirety of Sabah and investigate additional aspects of immigrant issues in order to enhance the abundance of data on this subject in Sabah.

Co-Author Contribution

The authors confirmed that there is no conflict of interest in this article. Author 1 carried out the fieldwork and prepared the literature review. Author 2 wrote the research methodology and did the statistical analysis and interpretation of the results. While author 3 reviewed the whole article before submission for publication.

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Appendix 1

Table 2. Interview Questions

| No. | Section | Questions |
|-----|---------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Demographic Profile | Introduction Session: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Can you tell us your age, occupation, race and place of living? |
| 2 | Opinion on Immigrants Migration | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● What is your view on the existence of immigrants in Sabah?● Do you think immigrants have an economic impact on Sabah and local people?● Do you think immigrants have social impacts on local people?● How far do you think the migration of the immigrants to Sabah affected the security of local people?● In what industries do these immigrants have a dominant presence?● Do you agree that immigrants are needed in Sabah due to local people that are not interested in doing the jobs that are normally done by immigrants?● What is your opinion when <i>Pasar Kraftangan</i> and Kota Kinabalu fish market become a place for most of the immigrants to earn money for living?● What is the implication of the existence of housing areas for immigrants?● In general, do you think the immigrants are well accepted by local people? |