LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION OF LOCAL YOUTH IN THE OIL PALM PLANTATION: CASE STUDY IN THE SELECTED STATES OF NORTHERN MALAYSIA

NURFARAHAIN BT ZAINOL

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By NURFARAHAIN BT ZAINOL

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ABSTRACT

The Malaysian oil palm industry is labor-intensive, especially in the oil palm plantations.

It is reported that in 2013, the total number of plantation workers comprise of 69%

foreigners and 31% local. The small number of local participation indicates their lack of

interest to work in the industry and this urged the industry to resort to employing

foreigners. The issues of rising social and security problems related to foreign workers; as

well as the increasing the cost of foreign workers following higher recruitment costs, thus

affecting the cost of palm oil production. The best solution is to locate the local labor

youth in oil palm plantation sector. This study aims to investigate factors of labor

shortage in oil palm plantations among local labor youth in Perak, Perlis, and Kedah. By

identifying factors that can attract more local to work in oil palm plantation, Malaysia can

reduce dependency upon foreign workers. A survey method through questionnaire was

used to collect data using random and purposive sampling method. A total of 332

respondents in FELCRA and FELDA were analysed using Probit model. Finding shows

that age and race are positively significant with the probability to participate in oil palm

plantation. Whereas gender, marital status, level of education, parents's jobs are

negatively significant. Imposing policies that improve the plantation environments, job's

status, facilities and benefits will help to attract local youth to participate in plantation

sector, specifically the oil palm.

Keywords: plantation, local labor youth, labor force participation, foreign workers

4

ABSTRAK

Industri sawit Malaysia adalah intensif buruh, terutamanya di ladang-ladang kelapa sawit . Ia melaporkan bahawa pada tahun 2013 , jumlah pekerja ladang terdiri daripada 69 % warga asing dan 31 % tempatan . Jumlah kecil penyertaan tempatan menunjukkan kekurangan yang mereka minat untuk bekerja dalam industri ini dan menggesa industri itu untuk mengambil warga asing. Isu-isu yang semakin meningkat seperti masalah sosial dan keselamatan yang berkaitan dengan pekerja asing; serta peningkatan kos pekerja asing berikutan kos pengambilan yang lebih tinggi dan akan menjejaskan kos pengeluaran minyak sawit . Penyelesaian terbaik adalah untuk mencari belia buruh tempatan dalam sektor perladangan kelapa sawit . Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menyiasat faktor kekurangan buruh di ladang-ladang kelapa sawit di kalangan belia buruh tempatan di Perak, Perlis, dan Kedah. Oleh itu,antara faktor-faktor yang boleh menarik lebih ramai tempatan untuk bekerja di ladang kelapa sawit dienalpasti, Malaysia boleh mengurangkan pergantungan kepada pekerja asing . Satu kaedah tinjauan melalui soal selidik telah digunakan untuk mengumpul data kajian secara rawak dan bertujuan. Seramai 332 responden di FELCRA dan FELDA telah dianalisis menggunakan model PROBIT. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa umur dan kaum adalah positif yang signifikan dengan kebarangkalian untuk mengambil kerja dibahagian dalam ladang kelapa sawit . Manakala jantina , status perkahwinan , tahap pendidikan, pekerjaan ibu bapa adalah negatif yang ketara . Mengenakan dasar-dasar yang meningkatkan persekitaran ladang, status, kemudahan dan faedah pekerjaan yang akan membantu untuk menarik belia tempatan menyertai sektor perladangan, khususnya di kelapa sawit.

Kata Kunci : perladangan , belia buruh tempatan , penyertaan tenaga buruh , pekerja asing

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TABLE OF CONTENT

TOPIC		PAGES
PERMISSION TO USE		i
ABSTRACT		ii
ABSTACK		iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT		iv
TABLE OF CONTENT		V
LIST OF TABLE		ix
LIST OF FIGURE		viii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS		X
CHAPTED ONE - INTRODUC	CTION	1
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION 1.1 INTRODUCTION	LIION	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION 1.2 THE MALAYSIAN P	DAT M OH	1
INDUSTRY	ALW OIL	9
1.3 BACKGROUND OF	STUDY	13
	nd Consolidation Rehabilition Authority	13
(FELCRA	•	18
· ·	l Land Development Authority (FELDA)	18
1.4 PROBLEM STATEM	IENT	19
1.5 RESEARCH QUEST	ION	20
1.6 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY		20
1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF	STUDY	21
1.8 SCOPE OF STUDY	1.8 SCOPE OF STUDY	
1.9 ORGANIZATION RE	EPORT	22
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATU	URE REVIEW	23
2.1 INTRODUCTION		23
2.2 THEORETICAL ANI	O CONCEPT	24
	of plantation	24
History of		25
2.2.2 plantation	-	25
2.2.3 Participation		26
	tage in oil palm plantation	27
	ecting participant labor youth	20
-	plantation sectors Level of education	29
2.2.3.1	LEVEL OF CHUCAHOII	29

	2.2.5.2	2 Immigration	30
	2.2.5.3	3 Foreign workers in	
		oil palm plantation sectors	34
	2.2.5.4	4 Socioeconomic and welfare effect	36
2.3	EMPIRICAL		38
2.4	CONCLUSION		43
CHAPTI	ER THREE : DATA	AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	44
3.1	INTRODUCTION		44
3.2	CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK		45
3.3	RESEARCH DESI	GN	46
3.4	SOURCES OF DA	TA	47
	3.4.1 Primary	data	47
	3.4.1.3	1 Questionnaire	48
3.5	DATA COLLECTI	ION	48
	3.5.1 Population	on and sample	49
	3.5.2 Unit of a	nnalysis	49
	3.5.3 Data col	lection procedure	50
3.6	MEASUREMENT	OF VARIABLES	51
3.7	DATA ANALYSIS	\mathbf{S}	52
	3.7.1 Statistica	al package of social science (SPSS)	52
	3.7.2 Data ana	alysis and statistical software (STATA)	53
	3.7.3 Descript	ive Statistic	53
	3.7.4 Data scro	eening	53
3.8	ANALYTICAL TE	ECHNIQUE	54
3.9	CONCLUSION		56
		SIS AND INTERPRETATION OF	
RESULT			57
4.1			57
	DESCRIPTIVE AN		58
4.3	DEMOGRAPHIC I		58
	Part A: Descriptive	•	58
	•	about participating in oil palm plantation	65
	Part C: Probit analy	vsis	71
4.4	CONCLUSION		74

CHAPTE	ER FIVE : SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	75
5.1	SUMMARY	75
5.2	DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY	77
5.3	POLICY IMPLICATION	78
	5.3.1 Improve working condition for oil palm plantation	78
	5.3.2 Increase of facilities and benefits for	
	local youth labor in oil palm plantation	79
5.4	SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE STUDY	71
REFERENCES		82
APPENDI	IX 1 : QUESTIONNAIRE IX 2 : DESCRIPTIVE STATISTIC IX 3 : PROBIT REGRESSION	

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 : Oil Palm Planted Area by Category at December 2013	
Figure 2 : The Map of Northern Region in Malaysia	
Figure 3 : Conceptual Framework for Involvement of Local Youth in	
Oil Palm Plantation	45
Figure 4: Marital Status in Percent (%)	61
Figure 5 : Category Age n Percent (%)	
Figure 6 : Respondent who work or not work in Oil Palm Plantation	63

LIST OF TABLE

Table 1: Overview of Oil Palm in Malaysia	
Table 2: Distribution of Oil Palm Planted Area by State and Sector in 2013	
Table 3: Estimated Total Workforce in Oil Palm Cultivation in Malaysia by	
Category of Work	42
Table 4: Definition and Measurement of Independent variables	51
Table 5: Descriptive Analysis	59
Table 6: Economic Fortune	65
Table 7: Work Environment	66
Table 8: Social Facilities	68
Table 9: Social Status Job	69
Table 10: Government/Employer Policies	70
Table 11: Probit Estimation Result	71

LIST OF ABBREVIATION

CPO Crude Palm Oil

DOA Department of Agriculture

EPF Employees Provident Fund

FELCRA Federal Land Consolidation & Rehabilitation Authority

FELDA Federal Land Development Authority

FFB Fruit Bunches

FGVH Felda Global Ventures Holdings

IMPAC Institute of Malaysia Plantation and Commodities

IOI IOI Corporation Berhad

GDP Gross Domestic Product

GNI Gross National Income

KOML Plantation Mechanization Operator's Course

MAPA Malayan Agricultural Producers Association

MPI Minister of Plantation Industries and Commodities

MPOA Malaysia Palm Oil Association

MPOB Malaysia Palm Oil Board

MPOC Malaysia Palm Oil Council

NDP National Development Policy

NVC National Vision Policy

PLASMA Malaysian Palm Training Center

RISDA Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority

SPSS Statistical Package of Social Science

STATA Data Analysis and Statistical Software

UNRSD United Nation Research Institute of Social Development

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The oil palm industry forms the economic backbone of Malaysia and continues to face new challenges in the face of globalization. As of 2012, total planted oil palm in Malaysia is about 5, 037,959 hectares (MPOB, 2012). Sabah is a state that has the most extensive area of oil palm cultivation in Malaysia. The total is 1.28million hectares which represent 30 percent the total area of oil palm cultivation in Malaysia (MPOB, 2012). Palm oil was exported to 145 countries around the world and all thus placing it as an economic generator in the agriculture sector (MPOB, 2012). The increase in commodities is expected to continue based on its advantages and its ability to generate income to oil palm cultivation in Malaysia. In Malaysian oil palm plantations work force is needed because the use of mechanization and high technology has not yet comprehended. Sufficient force is important to ensure the operation of the farm will be completed on schedule to meet the needs of Malaysian palm oil industry. Dominance of foreign workers in the plantation sector in Malaysia is not something unusual. Statistics produced by the Labour Department where a total of 300,000 foreign workers employed in farm and industrial commodities, especially in oil palm plantations at the moment (Che Johari, 2008). However, the current percentage of foreign employment has decreased due to several factors. Government tries to reduce reliance on foreign workers in the plantation. Migrants from Indonesia also declined following the opening of large-scale oil palm

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