



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***FACTORS OF MIGRATION AND JOB SATISFACTION LEVEL AMONG
FOREIGN-EDUCATED NURSES IN MALAYSIA***

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FOREIGN-EDUCATED NURSES IN MALAYSIA**

By

LEE SU YEN

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra
Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of
Science**

August 2021

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

**FACTORS OF MIGRATION AND JOB SATISFACTION LEVEL AMONG
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By

LEE SU YEN

August 2021

Chair : Professor Soh Kim Lam, PhD
Faculty : Medicine and Health Sciences

Global migration and international recruitment have become trends in the nursing profession. Nurse migration to Malaysia was once a common phenomenon but has declined over the years. However, this number of foreign-educated nurses in Malaysia may be underestimated. Many of them working in clinics, nursing homes, and private homes were not required to register with the Malaysia Nursing Board. Exploring the migration of foreign-educated nurses in Malaysia can provide new insights on their population and factors affecting their migration to the country. This study examines the migration of foreign-educated nurses in Malaysia, including factors affecting migration and their job satisfaction level.

A cross-sectional design with purposive and snowball sampling method was conducted on foreign-educated nurses working in Malaysia. Foreign-educated nurses on the list from Malaysian Nursing Board were contacted, the study's purpose explained, and additional information was obtained from nurses who agreed to participate. The respondents then introduced their friends or colleagues who were either registered or unregistered with the board. Thus, snowball sampling began with sharing contact information between individuals.

A structured questionnaire originated from Oda et al. (2016) was used to collect data. The questionnaire comprises four sections: respondents' profile, nursing education, working abroad, and job satisfaction.

Subjects (n=102) participated in the study. The majority of the foreign-educated nurses who participated in this study were unregistered with the Malaysian Nursing Board (79.4%), worked as registered nurse (86.3%) in nursing or private homes (75.5%). 68.6% of the foreign-educated nurses were females, Christians (73.5%), from Philippines (67.6%) and obtained a bachelor's degree certificate

(80.4%). Findings revealed more than 50% of the foreign-educated nurses stated that the pull factors affecting their migration to the country were higher salary and benefits, better quality of day-to-day life, self-respect and dignity, low recruitment and processing fees, children's education and future, and high level of nursing skills and technology in Malaysia. The main push factors causing participants to migrate to Malaysia were low salary and few benefits in their own country (68.6%), high ratio of patients to nursing care (64.7%), poor working conditions (58.8%), problem or corruption in obtaining employment (57.8%) and limited opportunities for promotion and career advancement (56.9%). The demographic status of the foreign-educated nurses was correlated with the pull and push factors ($p < 0.05$). 85.3% of the foreign-educated nurses expressed a positive satisfaction level, primarily when serving the sick and needy (85.3%). The results revealed significant differences in job satisfaction of registered and unregistered foreign-educated nurses ($p = 0.04$), nurses with Hindu, and other religions ($p = 0.03$), nurses from India and the Philippines ($p = 0.02$).

The majority of the foreign-educated nurses in Malaysia was not register with the Malaysian Nursing Board. However, the overall satisfaction of these nurses was positive. Pull-push factors identified in this study showed a significant relationship with the sociodemographic status. There was a significant difference between sociodemographic status, factors affecting migration, and job satisfaction among the foreign-educated nurses. Nurse managers and policy makers at both entrance and exit points of the migration process should use these findings to facilitate effective management of the consequential challenges of the migration process.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

FAKTOR MIGRASI DAN KEPUASAN KERJA DALAM KALANGAN JURURAWAT BERPENDIDIKAN LUAR NEGARA DI MALAYSIA

Oleh

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Ogos 2021

Pengerusi : Profesor Soh Kim Lam, PhD
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Migrasi global dan pengambilan pekerja antarabangsa telah menjadi trend dalam profesion kejururawatan. Migrasi jururawat ke Malaysia pernah menjadi satu fenomena yang biasa tetapi telah merosot selama ini. Walau bagaimanapun, bilangan jururawat berpendidikan luar negara di Malaysia ini mungkin dianggap rendah hasil ramai daripada mereka yang bekerja di klinik, rumah penjagaan dan rumah persendirian tidak perlu mendaftar dengan Lembaga Jururawat Malaysia. Penerokaan penghijrahan jururawat berpendidikan luar negara di Malaysia boleh memberikan pandangan baharu mengenai populasi dan faktor yang mempengaruhi penghijrahan mereka ke negara ini. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk meneroka penghijrahan jururawat berpendidikan luar negara di Malaysia, termasuk faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi penghijrahan dan tahap kepuasan kerja mereka.

Reka bentuk penyelidikan dengan kaedah persampelan bertujuan dan bola salji telah dijalankan. Jururawat berpendidikan luar negara dalam senarai daripada Lembaga Jururawat Malaysia telah dihubungi, tujuan kajian diterangkan, dan informasi tambahan telah diperolehi daripada jururawat yang setuju untuk meyertai kajian ini. Responden kemudian memperkenalkan kawan-kawan atau rakan sekerja yang berdaftar atau tidak berdaftar dengan Lembaga. Oleh itu, kaedah persampelan bola salji bermula dari berkongsi maklumat hubungan antara individu.

Soalselidik berstruktur yang berasal dari Oda et al. (2016) telah digunakan untuk mengumpul data. Soalselidik tersebut merangkumi empat bahagian: profil responden, pendidikan kejururawatan, berkerja di luar negara, dan kepuasan kerja.

Subjek (n=102) telah mengambil bahagian dalam kajian ini. Majoriti jururawat berpendidikan luar negara yang mengambil bahagian dalam kajian ini adalah tidak berdaftar (79.4%), kerja sebagai jururawat (86.3%) di rumah jagaan atau rumah persendirian (75.5%). 68.6% jururawat berpendidikan luar negara adalah wanita, beragama Kristian (73.5%), dari Filipina (67.5%) dan mempunyai sijil ijazah sarjana muda (80.4%). Penemuan telah menunjukkan bahawa lebih daripada 50% jururawat berpendidikan luar negara menyatakan bahawa faktor penarik yang mempengaruhi penghijrahan mereka ke negara ini adalah gaji dan faedah yang lebih tinggi, kualiti hidup seharian yang lebih baik, rasa hormat diri dan maruah, pengambilan dan yuran pemprosesan yang rendah, pendidikan kanak-kanak dan masa depan serta tahap kemahiran kejururawatan dan teknologi yang tinggi di Malaysia. Faktor penolak utama yang menyebabkan peserta berhijrah ke Malaysia adalah gaji dan manfaat yang rendah di negara asal mereka (68.6%), nisbah pesakit dan jururawat yang tinggi (64.7%), keadaan kerja yang tidak kondusif (58.8%), masalah rasuah untuk mendapatkan pekerjaan (57.8%) dan peluang yang terhad untuk promosi dan kemajuan kerjaya (56.9%). Status demografi adalah berkait dengan faktor-faktor penarik dan penolak ($p < 0.05$). 85.3% daripada jururawat berpendidikan luar negara yang mengambil bahagian dalam kajian ini menyatakan tahap kepuasan yang positif, terutamanya apabila mereka berkhidmat kepada yang sakit dan memerlukan bantuan (85.3%). Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa terdapat perbezaan signifikan dalam kepuasan kerja jururawat berpendidikan luar negara yang berdaftar dan tidak berdaftar ($p = 0.04$), jururawat yang beragama Hindu dan agama lain ($p = 0.03$), jururawat dari negara India dan Filipina ($p = 0.02$).

Majoriti jururawat berpendidikan luar negara adalah tidak berdaftar dengan Lembaga Jururawat Malaysia. Namun, kepuasan keseluruhan jururawat-jururawat ini adalah positive. Faktor penarik-penolak yang dikenalpasti dalam penyelidikan ini menunjukkan hubungan yang signifikan dengan status sosiodemografi, dan terdapat perbezaan signifikan antara status demografi, factor mempengaruhi migrasi dan kepuasan kerja antara jururawat berpendidikan luar negara. Ketua jururawat dan pembuat polisi di kedua-dua pintu masuk dan keluar dalam proses penghijrahan harus menggunakan penemuan kajian ini untuk membantu dalam pengurusan yang lebih berkesan terhadap cabaran-cabaran yang akan berbangkit dalam proses penghijrahan.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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This is to confirm that:

- the research conducted and the writing of this thesis was under our supervision;
- supervision responsibilities as stated in the Universiti Putra Malaysia (Graduate Studies) Rules 2003 (Revision 2012-2013) are adhered to.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

In the era of the 21st century, medical technology is changing rapidly towards more advanced health care facilities. Consequently, the population's life span is increasing, and people are more demanding in high-quality care from health care professionals. Nursing service is an essential part of the health care system. The shortage of nurses has been a common issue in many countries worldwide (Matsuno, 2009). World Health Organization (2016) projected that there will be a shortage of 14 million healthcare workers in the year 2030 globally. To counteract the "crisis in the nursing workforce," many countries have developed few strategies, including recruiting foreign-educated nurses. As a result, global migration and international recruitment have become a trend in the nursing profession.

Nurse migration to Malaysia was once very active and was used by the government as one of the strategies to fill in the shortages of nurses in the country. In year 2006, it was reported that the nurse to population ratio was 1 in 559, far from the recommendation nurse to population ratio of 1 in 200 by the World Health Organization (Malaysian Nursing Board, 2018a). The reasons behind this phenomenon are mainly due to the increase of the ageing population in the country. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2018), 6.5 percent (2.10 million) of the total population in Malaysia are senior citizens with the age of 65 years and above (Figure 1). The senior citizen population is expected to be increased by the year 2030 (Barnett et al., 2010). On top of the increase of local senior citizens in the country, the government also introduced the "Malaysia, My Second Home Program (MM2H) in the year 2001 further encouraged foreign people older than 50 years old to live in Malaysia on a long-term basis (Matsuno, 2009). It has attracted 10,227 foreigners from various countries, including the United States, Europe, Africa, and Asia, who migrated to Malaysia from 2002 to 2007 (Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia, 2013). This has further added to the number of senior citizens population in Malaysia.

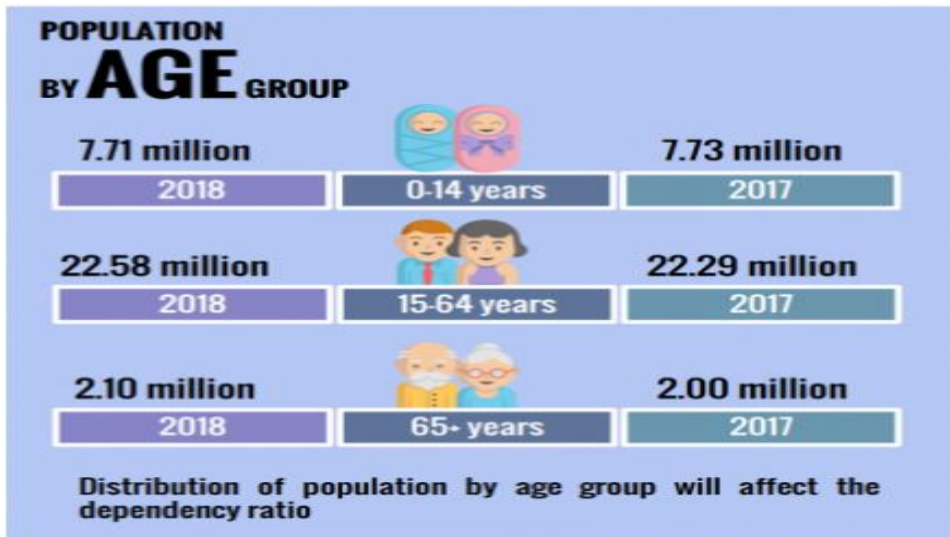


Figure 1.1: Malaysian Population by Age Group
(Source: Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2018)

At the same time, many Malaysian nurses do follow the trend of migration to work abroad despite a shortage of nurses in the country (Matsuno, 2009). Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia (2010) reported that the minister was not aware that a government hospital did not hire some graduates of public universities. Hence, these graduates were looking at other places such as the private sector and foreign countries. It was also reported that a private organization in Singapore recruited many degree holder Malaysia nurses to serve in Singapore hospitals (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2010). This has again contributed to the shortfall of nurses in Malaysia.

In confronting with the issue of shortage of nurses in the country, a Nursing Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) was signed with the Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN) countries: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam in 2006 (Malaysian Nursing Board, 2020). This arrangement helped to facilitate the mobility of nurses within ASEAN, especially in promoting the adoption of best practices for professional nursing services (Malaysian Nursing Board, 2020). Ever since after the MRA, the recruitment of foreign-educated nurses has become very active. The number of foreign-educated nurses who were newly registered rose from 740 in 2006 to 1317 in 2010 (Malaysian Nursing Board, 2018a). Figure 2 shows the registered nurse workforce in Malaysia.

Item	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Local Nurses ¹ (accumulative)	42836	47428	52207	63309	65905	75455	87476	90722	92131	99986	102542	128591	132902
Foreign ASEAN Nurses													
Brunei	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cambodia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Indonesia	6	42	26	55	64	61	28	7	5	4	1	1	-
Lao PDR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Thailand	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Vietnam	3	4	1	3	4	2	3	3	2	1	-	1	-
Myanmar	58	75	77	91	70	75	30	12	3	2	-	1	-
Philippines	18	40	107	135	97	69	49	26	16	15	2	8	9
Singapore	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	3	3
Foreign Non-ASEAN Nurses ² (newly Registered)	654	692	840	1031	774	645	386	109	50	51	7	7	7
Total Registered Nurse Workforce ³	43576	48284	53259	64626	66916	76309	87974	90881	92209	100062	102564	106289	106373
Nurse to Population Ratio ⁴	1:559	1:556	1:512	1:477	1:410	1:387	1:345	1:333	1:325	1:305	1:309	1:302	1:304

Note: Data for Foreign Nurse should be only newly registered data for the particular year (accumulative between 1 Jan – 31 Dec). Registered Nurses are not necessarily the same as practising nurses.

Figure 1.2: Registered Nurse Workforce in Malaysia
(Source: Malaysian Nursing Board, 2018a)

Besides recruiting qualified foreign professionals, Malaysia also tried to strengthen the national nursing workforce by increasing the number of locally educated nurses from the year 2005 to 2010 (Pillay, 2017). The government vigorously promoted nursing education, resulting in a proliferation of private nursing schools that annually produced up to 10,000 graduates (Goh, 2017). Consequently, there was a significant increase in the number of nurses in Malaysia in the early 2010s (World Health Organization, 2014). As the number of local nurses increased, the number of foreign-educated nurses who were newly registered with the Nursing Board gradually reduced from 1317 in 2010 to only 19 in 2018 (Figure 2) (Malaysian Nursing Board, 2018a). However, this figure is likely to be underestimated. According to Fukunaga (2015) in his report in assessing the progress of ASEAN MRAs, 150 to 200 nurses were migrated to Malaysia from Myanmar. Furthermore, assistant director nursing from the Malaysian Nursing Board had recently confirmed during an interview that a large number of foreign-educated nurses who are not required to register with the board as they are working in clinics, nursing homes and private homes (R. Bujang, personal communication, March 7, 2019). This information is congruent with the report by Loh et al. (2019) in World Bank, where there are seven irregular foreign workers for every ten regular foreign workers currently working in Malaysia. It is difficult to determine the undocumented foreign worker such as the foreign nurses' population in Malaysia as they are not registered with authorities. Hence, their entry and exit in the labor market will not be recorded (Lee & Khor, 2018). In this sense, this study provides new insights on the migration among the foreign-educated nurses and their population in Malaysia.

1.2 Problem statement

Labor migration is a voluntary act, and there must be compelling reasons for people to decide to work abroad. The "pull" and "push" factors are one way of understanding migration. Pull factors such as higher wages, high employment opportunities, better facilities, higher living standards, and so on in the destination country motivate the foreign-educated nurses to migrate (Kingma, 2007). Likewise, lower wages, poor working conditions, and so on are considered as the common "push factors" that cause the foreign-educated nurses to leave their country (Kingma, 2007). Pull and push factors are paired, and Rajan et al. (2017) described it as "they are two sides of the same coin" (p. 114). Exploring the pull-push factors among Malaysia's foreign-educated nurses and analyzing their impact on migration decisions is a crucial step toward understanding the migration issues and policymaking (Oda et al., 2018).

Migration to work abroad can be challenging for foreign-educated nurses. Many foreign-educated nurses face difficulties adapting to their new working environment (Li et al., 2014). Leaving their families behind to work in a new country, adjusting to new relationships with work colleagues, and facing patients with multi-cultural backgrounds can be very stressful to foreign-educated nurses (Li et al., 2014). This may lead to feelings of isolation, loneliness, difficulty coping, frustration, uncertainty, and a lack of self-confidence and self-esteem during the transition process, impacting their work satisfaction (Li et al., 2014). Ahmad and Oranye (2010), in their study on job satisfaction and organizational commitment, reported that higher job satisfaction would lead to more organizational commitment among the nurses. It will help to ensure the nurses are dedicated to their job and provide the best services to the clients, regardless of whether they are in hospitals, clinics, nursing, or private homes.

Likewise, frustration and job dissatisfaction among foreign-educated nurses may lead to many problems such as absenteeism, tardiness, and turnover (Cheng & Liou, 2011). Additionally, emotional stress and burnout will result in staff conflict, decreased productivity, and substandard and compromised patient care (Al-Turki et al., 2010). This will affect the health of Malaysian patients, particularly elderly patients who may develop complications such as pressure sores or aspirated pneumonia if these migrant nurses do not provide standard care. Worse yet, these migrant nurses may engage in unhealthy and unethical behaviors such as fighting and drinking, contributing to the country's social problems (Leh et al., 2017). Hence, a clear understanding of the job satisfaction among the foreign-educated nurses in Malaysia is also critical as it influences the effective translation of nursing practice across cultures and health systems.

Many studies on migration of foreign nurses, such as the current situation of foreign nurses, issues, and job satisfaction, have been done mainly in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, India, and the Philippines (Dywili et al., 2013; Lorenzo et al., 2007; Newton et al., 2012; Oda et al., 2018; Salami et al., 2014). But this topic is scarcely explored in Malaysia. Exploring the current situation of

foreign-educated nurses working in Malaysia, addressing their issues and challenges will help guide professionals and policy makers to be more effective in improving working conditions of the foreign-educated nurses, human resource development, and management in the health sector in Malaysia. Therefore, this study aims to examine the migration of foreign-educated nurses in Malaysia, including factors affecting them to migrate to Malaysia and their job satisfaction when working in Malaysia.

1.3 Research question

1. What is the sociodemographic status of the foreign-educated nurses in Malaysia?
2. What are the factors affecting the foreign-educated nurses who migrate to Malaysia?
3. Is there a relationship between sociodemographic status and factors affecting the migration of foreign-educated nurses to Malaysia?
4. What is the job satisfaction level of foreign-educated nurses in Malaysia?
5. Is there any difference between the sociodemographic status and job satisfaction among the foreign-educated nurses in Malaysia?
6. Is there any difference between factors affecting migration and job satisfaction among the foreign-educated nurses in Malaysia?

1.4 Objectives of Study

General objectives

To study the migration and job satisfaction of the foreign-educated nurses in Malaysia.

Specific objectives

1. To describe the sociodemographic status of the foreign-educated nurses in Malaysia.
2. To describe the factors affecting the foreign-educated nurses migrate to Malaysia.
3. To examine the relationship between sociodemographic status and factors affecting the migration of foreign-educated nurses to Malaysia.
4. To identify the job satisfaction level of foreign-educated nurses in Malaysia.
5. To examine the difference between sociodemographic status and job satisfaction among the foreign-educated nurses in Malaysia.
6. To examine the difference between factors affecting migration and job satisfaction among foreign-educated nurses in Malaysia.

1.5 Research hypothesis

1. There is no relationship between sociodemographic status and factors affecting the migration of the foreign-educated nurses to Malaysia (null hypothesis).
2. There is no difference between sociodemographic status and job satisfaction among the foreign-educated nurses in Malaysia (null hypothesis).
3. There is no difference between factors affecting migration and job satisfaction among the foreign-educated nurses in Malaysia (null hypothesis).

1.6 Definition of terms

1.6.1 Migration

Movement of people to a new area or country in order to find work or better living conditions (Oxford Living Dictionary, 2019g). Nurses who are moving from other countries to Malaysia to find work.

1.6.2 Foreign-educated nurse

Nurses who were born, raised, educated and obtained nursing license in another country (Viken et al., 2018). Nurses who were born, raised, educated and obtained nursing license in another country and are currently work as a nurse or any related healthcare occupations in private sector in Malaysia will be considered as foreign-educated nurse.

1.6.3 Job satisfaction

A feeling of fulfilment or enjoyment that a person derives from their job (Oxford Living Dictionary, 2019e). Job satisfaction among the foreign-educated nurses refers to the feeling of fulfilment or enjoyment that the nurses derive from their job in Malaysia.

1.6.4 Registered nurse

A graduate trained nurse who has been licensed by a state authority after qualifying for registration (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2019b). The nurse who are registered with their home country and can be with or without registering with Malaysia Nursing Board.

1.6.5 Workplace

A place where people work, such as an office or factory (Oxford Living Dictionary, 2019i). A place where foreign-educated nurses work which include hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, rehabilitation hospitals and others such as home of the patient as private nurse.

1.6.6 Gender

Either of the two sexes (male and female), especially when considered with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones (Oxford Living Dictionary, 2019d).

1.6.7 Religion

The belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods (Oxford Living Dictionary, 2019h). Religion that include in this study are Hindu, Christian, Muslim and others that allow the foreign-educated nurses to specify.

1.6.8 Country of origin

The country where something or someone comes from (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2019a). Country of origin in study refers to the country that the foreign-educated nurses come from.

1.6.9 Marital status

One's situation with regard to whether one is single, married, separated, divorced, or widowed (Oxford Living Dictionary, 2019f). Situation of a foreign-educated nurses with regard to whether he / she is single, married, separated, divorced or widowed.

1.6.10 Education level

The process of receiving or giving systematic instruction, especially at a school or university (Oxford Living Dictionary, 2019c). Stages of the process of receiving systematic instruction, including from below primary to graduate and above.

1.6.11 Push factors

Favorable and unfavorable conditions or forces people out from one country (Geun et al., 2018).

Favorable and unfavorable conditions that forces foreign-educated nurses to move out from their country to work in Malaysia. Those conditions / factors are such as dealing with patients, occupational hazards, limited opportunities for career advancement, high ration of patients to nurses, salary, corruption in promotion, inadequate facilities, poor working conditions, poor relationships with colleagues and superiors, lack of competencies and discrimination by patients and management.

1.6.12 Pull factors

Conditions that attracted the people to the country (Geun et al., 2018).

Conditions that attract the foreign-educated nurses to migrate and work in Malaysia. These conditions are such as family live in Malaysia, high level of nursing skills and technology, higher salary and benefits, geographical proximity, interested in country's culture, can obtain citizenship, can bring family, can speak the local language, possibility to obtain the country's nursing license, same religion, low recruitment and processing fee, self-respect or dignity, better children's education or future, better quality of day-to-day life.

1.7 Summary

The population of foreign-educated nurses currently working in Malaysia could be underestimated. Many of them work in clinics, nursing homes, and private homes and are not required to register with the Malaysia Nursing Board. Exploring the current situation of foreign-educated nurses working in Malaysia, addressing their issues and challenges will help guide professionals and policy makers to be more effective in improving working conditions of the foreign-educated nurses, human resource development, and management in the management of the health sector in Malaysia. Therefore, this study aims to explore the migration of foreign-educated nurses in Malaysia, including factors affecting them to migrate to Malaysia and their job satisfaction when working in Malaysia. Literature review in chapter 2 explores the current trend in migration of nurses, the sociodemographic of the migrant nurses, factors influencing the migration, and job satisfaction in the migrant country.

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