Public Attitudes to Migrant Workers

International Labour Organization

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A FOUR COUNTRY STUDY

PREPARED BY THE ILO REGIONAL OFFICE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC AND THE ILO TRIANGLE PROJECT

Outline

- Background

- Methodology

- Survey Results

- KAP Barometer

Background and Rationale

Why do attitudes matter?

- Attitudes may translate into actions and behaviours that negatively impact on certain individuals and groups in society.

- Policy makers and politicians may be drawn to introduce policies in accordance with actual or perceived public preferences.

Source: Crawley, H. (2009) *Understanding and changing public attitudes: A review of existing evidence from public information and communication campaigns*, Centre for Migration Policy Research, Swansea University.

A global trend

- In Europe, polls on attitudes towards migrants show large differences between Member States, but the overall conclusion is that public perception of migration tends to be increasingly negative.

  Beutin, R. et al (2006) *Migration and public perception*,
  Bureau of European Policy Advisers, European Commission.

- 39% of Asian Britons, 34% of white Britons and 21% of black Britons want all immigration into the UK to be stopped permanently, or at least until the economy improves.

  Populus / Searchlight Educational Trust (2011)

- Almost two thirds (63%) of UK employers report that non-EU workers have allowed them to increase productivity. 43% say they are struggling to fill vacancies from within the UK or from EU countries.

  CIPD / KPMG (2011)

TRIANGLE project

- ILO Tripartite Action to Protect Migrant Workers from Labour Exploitation **(the TRIANGLE project)** aims to strengthen the formulation and implementation of recruitment and labour protection policies and practices.

- In Thailand and Malaysia, the TRIANGLE project will cooperate with constituents and partners on a **campaign to promote understanding with migrant workers**. The campaign will highlight the contribution migrants make to the economy and society, counter misconceptions and promote the right to equal treatment.

- The findings of this survey will be used in the design of the campaign, and serve as a baseline against which to measure the impact of the survey.

Methodology

Survey design

- As this is a four-country study, special attention was given to survey design and methodology to ensure consistency in data collection. At the same time, there was a need to consider quality of information in relation to the cost of data collection.

- The sample size in each country was set to n=1000. This is deemed a large enough sample to be representative of any given population.

- In Thailand and Malaysia, face-to-face interviews were carried out across four provinces/states.

- In Korea and Singapore, data collection is significantly more expensive. As these countries have some of the world's highest levels of internet penetration, it was decided that online data collection would be far more cost-effective.

Target groups and sample distribution

In each country, target respondents were the general population aged 18 years or older, with a 50/50 split between males and females.

The sample in Korea and Singapore is nationally representative. For Malaysia and Thailand, areas with high numbers of migrant workers were selected.

Ethnicity was taken into account in both Malaysia and Singapore in terms of Malay, Chinese and Indian/other.

Country	Urban	Rural*	Total
Korea	890	110	1000
Singapore	1006	-	1006
Thailand			
Bangkok	256	-	256
Surat Thani	101	152	253
Chiang Mai	76	177	253
Samut Sakorn	108	144	252
Malaysia			
Kuala Lumpur	250	-	250
Selangor	220	30	250
Pahang	110	140	250
Perak	150	100	250
TOTAL	**3167**	**843**	**4020**

*Note: only semi-rural areas are included in Singapore and Korea

Sampling: face to face

- Sampling in Thailand and Malaysia was through multistage random sampling in both urban and rural locations using the following procedure.

  - First, a number of urban centers are randomly selected in the chosen provinces/states.

  - Sub-districts are then selected inside those urban centers to represent the urban proportion of the sample. Rural villages are also randomly selected outside the urban centers. The urban/rural split is proportionate to the population in each province.

  - In each selected sub-district, a random walk method is conducted to select dwellings.

  - Within each dwelling the Kish Grid method is used to select a respondent 18 years or older. Should the selected respondent not be home, up to three call backs are made before declaring a non-response.

- The final samples were weighted to reflect the actual population distribution.

Sampling: Face to Face

To ensure the samples were representative based on province, sex and age, the final samples were weighted to bring them in line with the population of the selected provinces.

Quotas were also used to ensure representation across urban and rural areas within the selected provinces and in Malaysia, quotas were also used to obtain representation across ethnic groups.

Parameter	Thailand sample n=1014 (%)	Thailand Weighted Sample n=1014 (%)	Malaysia sample n=1000 (%)	Malaysia Weighted Sample n=1000 (%)
SEX				
Male	44	50	50	49
Female	56	50	50	51
Age				
18 – 24	10	13	21	23
25 – 34	17	21	25	25
35 – 44	24	25	22	23
45 Or older	49	41	32	29
Ethnicity				
Malay	-	-	60	61
Chinese	-	-	29	28
Indian and others	-	-	11	11
Coverage				
	Four key provinces		Four key provinces	

Sampling: Online

The sampling methodology in Korea and Singapore was systematic random sampling from an online panel list with soft quotas on key population parameters (i.e. sex, age, geographic location, etc.).

To ensure the sample was nationally representative based on sex and age, the final samples were weighted to bring them in line with the national population.

Parameter	Korea sample n=1006 (%)	Korea Weighted Sample n=1006 (%)	Singapore sample n=1000 (%)	Singapore Weighted Sample n=1000 (%)
SEX				
Male	50	50	48	49
Female	50	50	52	51
Age				
18 – 24	25	17	20	16
25 – 34	30	26	21	19
35 – 44	30	27	28	21
45 or older	15	30	31	44
Coverage				
	12 areas including 7 largest cities		All 5 Regions	

Respondent Profile

On average, respondents in Korea and Singapore have a higher level of education and are more affluent as seen by their higher socioeconomic status (SES). Malaysia is in turn ahead of Thailand based on the same criteria.

Profile	Thailand n=1014	Malaysia n=1000	Korea n=1000	Singapore n=1006
Employer*	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Yes	26	15	31	33
Work status				
Studying	6	7	16	11
Employed	73	63	67	72
Other	21	30	17	17
Work Sector				
Agriculture	6	1	< 1	< 1
Manufacturing	3	8	12	8
Construction	3	4	5	4
Retail & wholesale	9	5	3	4
Services	11	20	19	21
Government	5	8	6	10
Self employed	20	17	5	5
Other	16	-	17	19
Education				
Elementary school	38	10	1	1
Junior high school	18	45	3	23
Senior high school	24	24	34	10
Diploma or higher	20	21	62	66
Income (SES)				
SES A	2	7	11	14
SES B	5	15	14	9
SES C	44	36	64	66
SES DE	49	42	11	11

Survey Findings

The number of information sources differs significantly between countries.

Respondents in Thailand got their information from 1.6 sources, on average, while people in Singapore have an average of 3.4 sources.

In Thailand, most people receive information about migrant workers through news and media reports. "Word of mouth" is much higher in Singapore and Malaysia.

From where have you heard or learned about migrant workers?

Information Source	Thailand n=904 (%)	Malaysia n=994 (%)	Korea n=973 (%)	Singapore n=976 (%)
News and media reports	97	90	80	87
Film or Documentary	6	11	23	32
Through work or colleagues	14	43	31	58
Through family and friends	15	62	22	50
Internet	4	12	47	53
Read a book	11	3	10	11
Public service announcement	6	15	20	34
Other	2	-	13	12
Average number of sources	**1.6**	**2.4**	**2.5**	**3.4**

Base: Those who have heard about migrant workers

Interaction with migrant workers

Have you had encounters with migrant workers

(Base: All respondents)
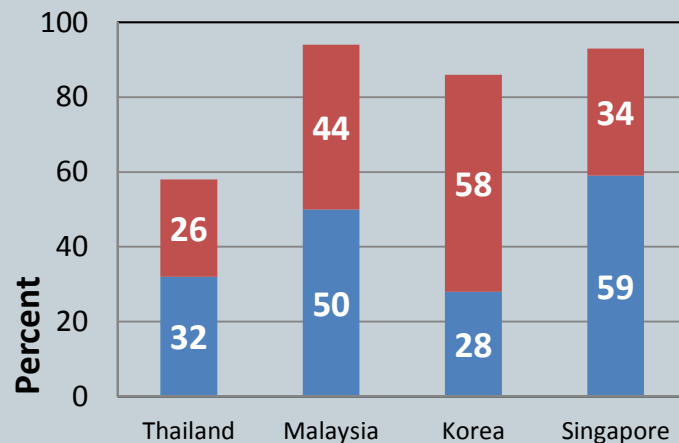
- Regularly
- Sometimes

Where have you encountered migrant workers?

(Base: Those who have had encounters)
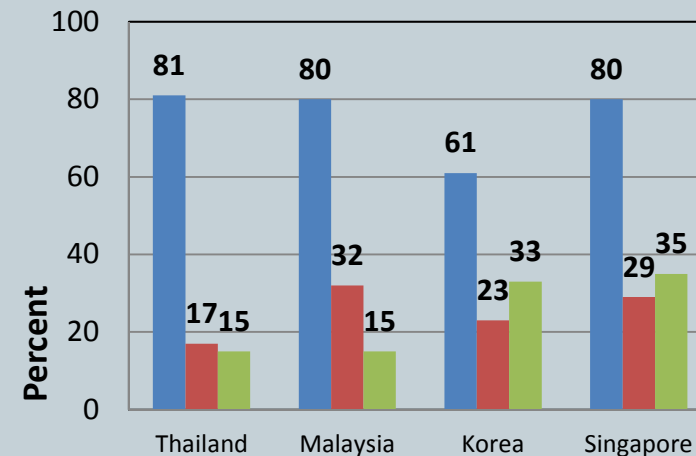
- Community
- Work
- Other

The respondents most likely to have encountered migrants were in Singapore and Malaysia – where foreign workers make up approximately 30% and 20% of the total workforce respectively. Thai respondents had the lowest level of interaction, with some four out of ten people having had no encounters with migrant workers. Most encounters take place in the general community.

Relationship with migrant workers

The vast majority of respondents in Singapore know foreign workers personally, and most are either personal friends or colleagues at work. In contrast, a much smaller proportion of respondents in Thailand know migrant workers personally.

Respondents in Singapore and Malaysia were far more likely to employ a migrant domestic worker than respondents in Thailand.

Know migrant workers personally
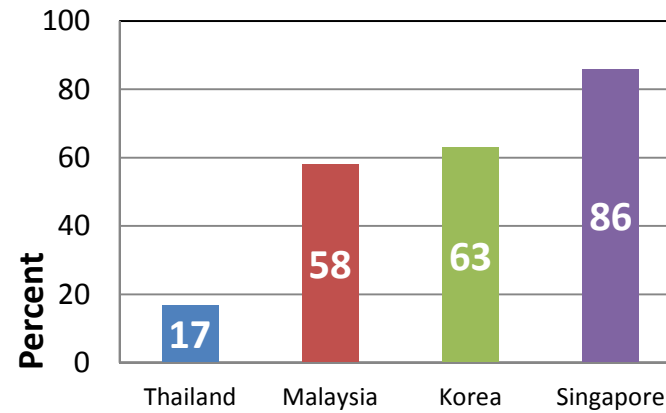
Type of relationship
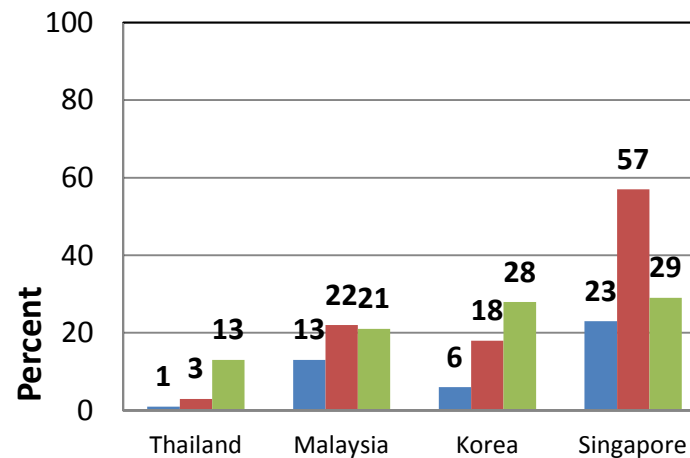
■ Supervised or Employed ■ Friends or Colleagues
■ Aquaintances

Base: Those who have encountered migrant workers

Knowledge

Proportion of respondents believing these statements to be "True"

Bar chart showing proportion of respondents (0 to 100) for Thailand, Malaysia, Korea, and Singapore across the following statements:
- Tying work permits to one employer can lead to mistreatment of MWs
- High costs and complex procedures contribute to unauthorized MWs
- Migrant wages have impact on the wages of national workers
- MWs are often exploited
- MWs make a net contribution to economy
- MWs are needed to fill labor shortages
- National and migrant workers should be treated equally

Legend: Thailand, Malaysia, Korea, Singapore

Attitude analysis

- Statements to gauge attitudes were formulated in the third person, allowing respondents to answer more truthfully without attaching themselves to the issue.

- Since most people are reluctant to come across as xenophobic or prejudicial, statements were framed as negatives, and respondents had to strongly disagree in order to demonstrate a positive attitude.

- Attitudes were measured on a four point scale. Positive and negative attitudes were identified as shown below.

Don't agree at all	Don't really agree	Agree to some extent	Agree completely
Positive Attitude	**Negative Attitude**		

Attitudes

Proportion of respondents that "Agree to some extent" or "Agree completely"
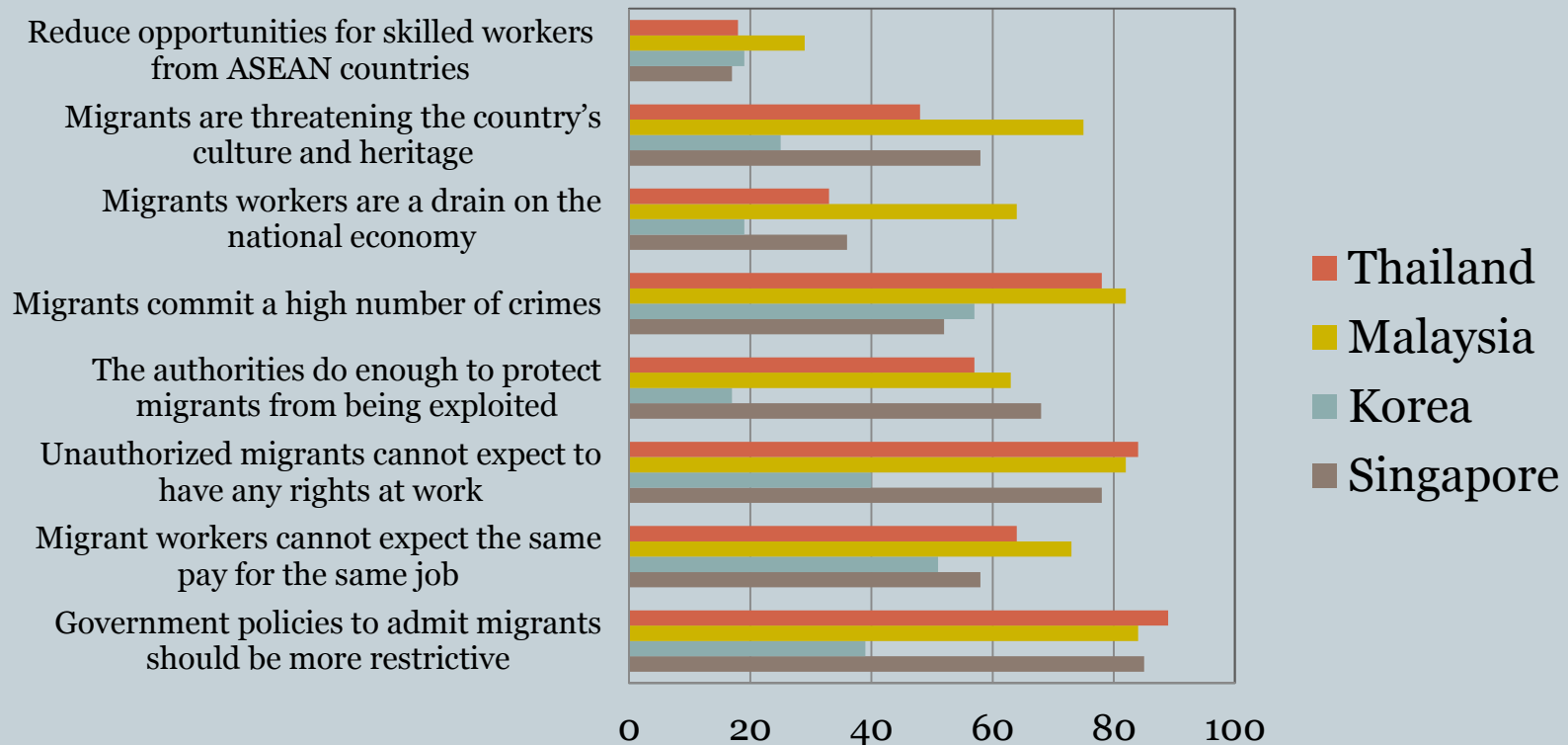
Behaviour

Proportion of respondents that said "Yes, they have" or "Yes, they would"
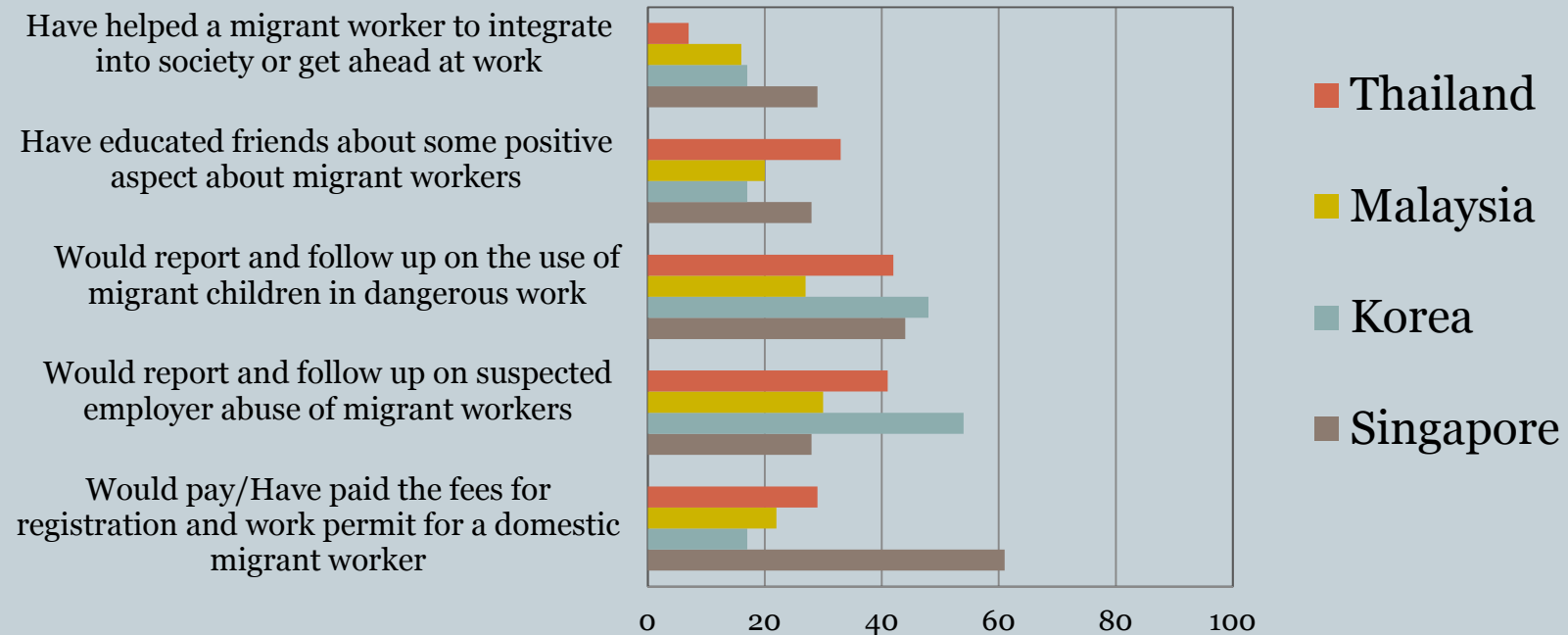
The vast majority of respondents in all four countries agree that it is better to crack down on employers of unregistered migrant workers rather than the migrant workers themselves.

The sentiment in Thailand is particularly strong whereas in Malaysia and Korea, around one in five people disagree with the idea.

Should the government do more to crack down on employers of unregistered migrants, rather than migrants?

Thailand	-8 -9	13	70
Malaysia	-18 -9	35	38
Korea	-21 -5	37	37
Singapore	-5 -6	36	53

-30 -20 -10 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90

■ Not sure ■ Don't agree ■ Agree ■ Agree completely
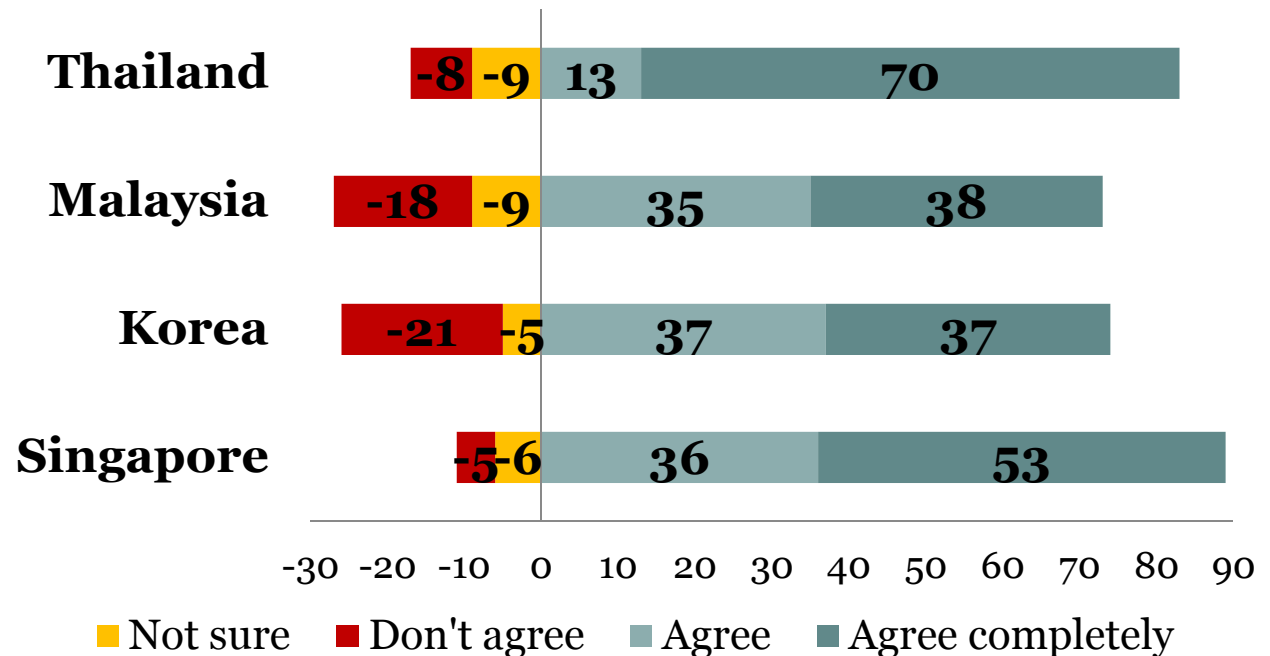
Migrants' ability to adapt to life in Thailand
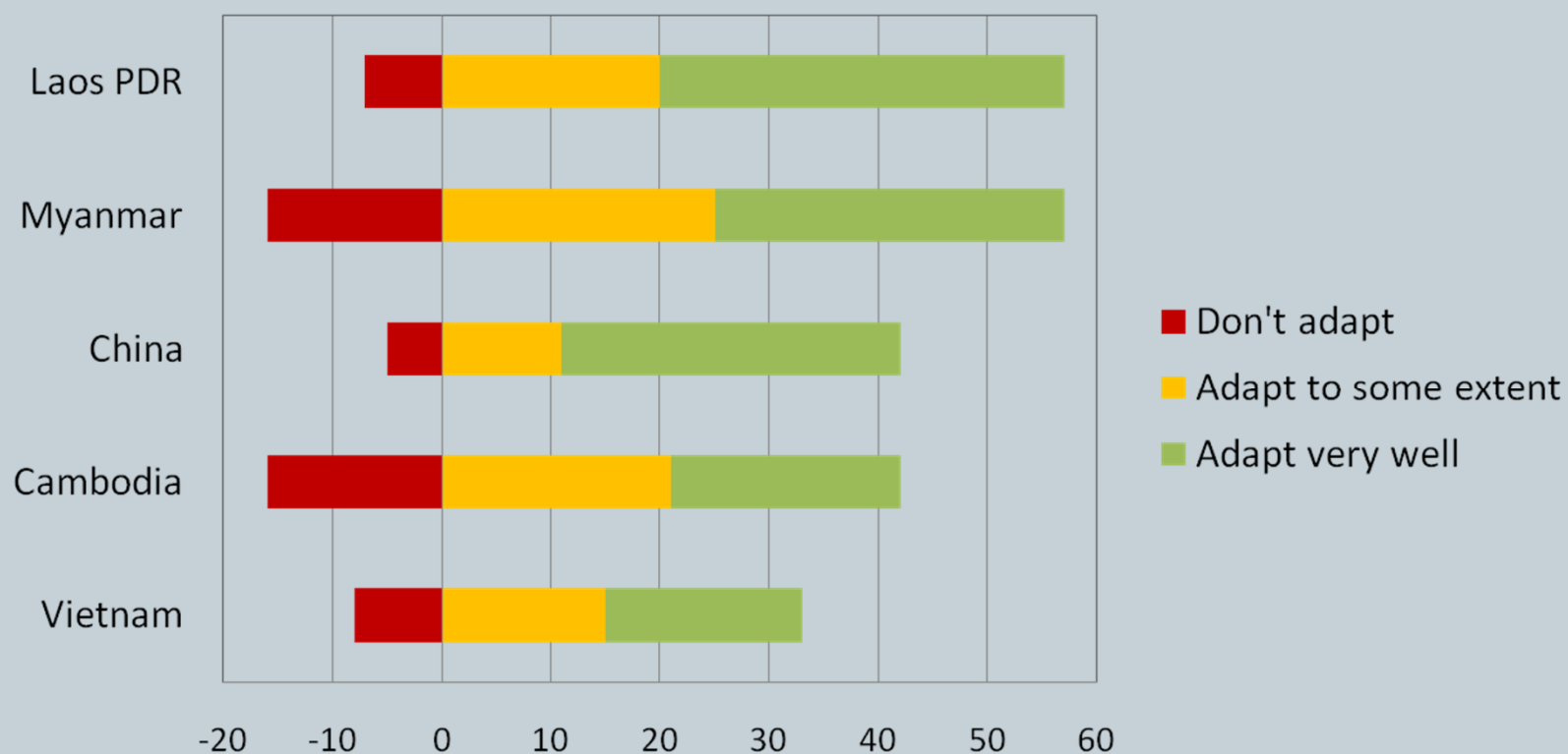
Migrants' ability to adapt to life in Malaysia
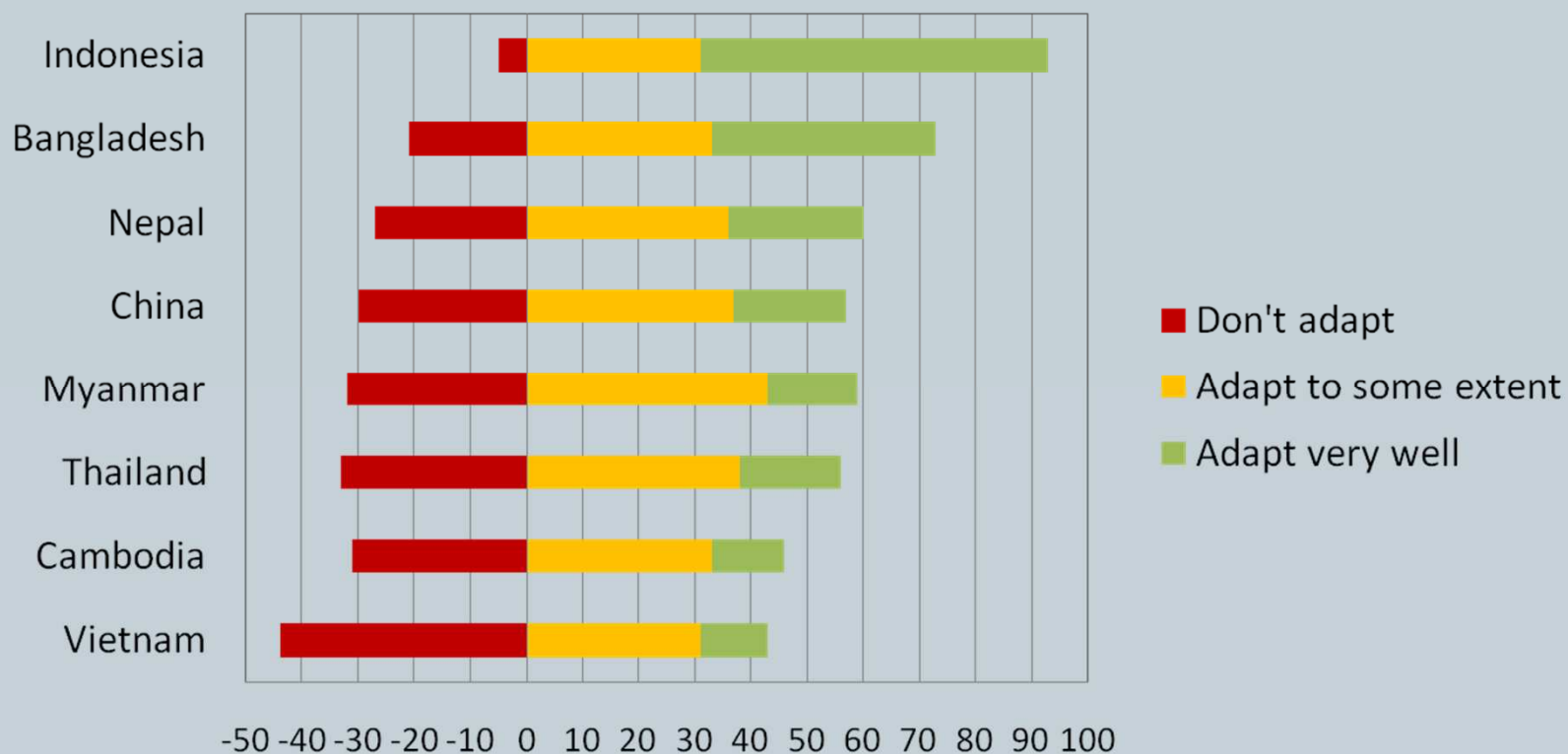
Migrants' ability to adapt to life in Singapore
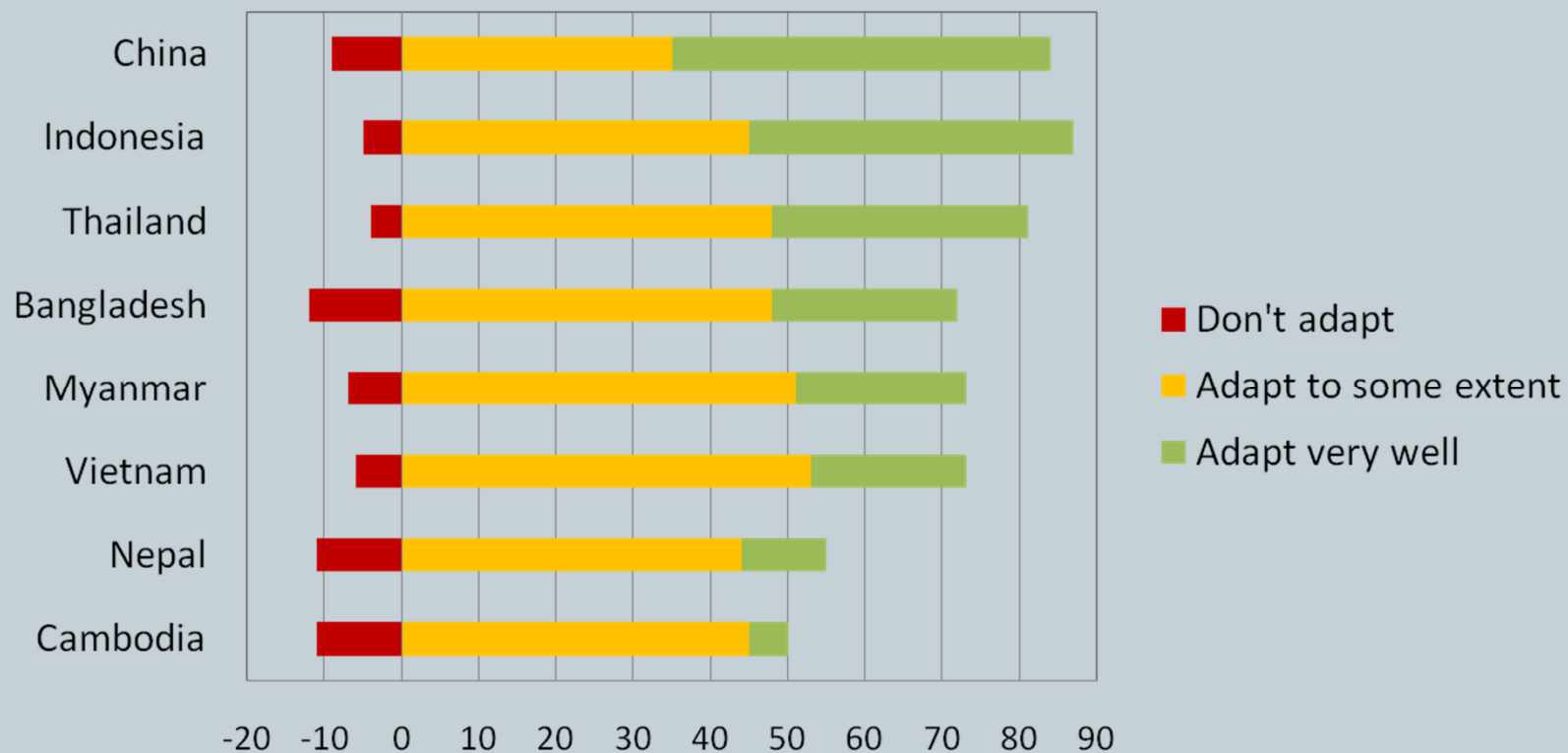
Migrants' ability to adapt to life in Korea
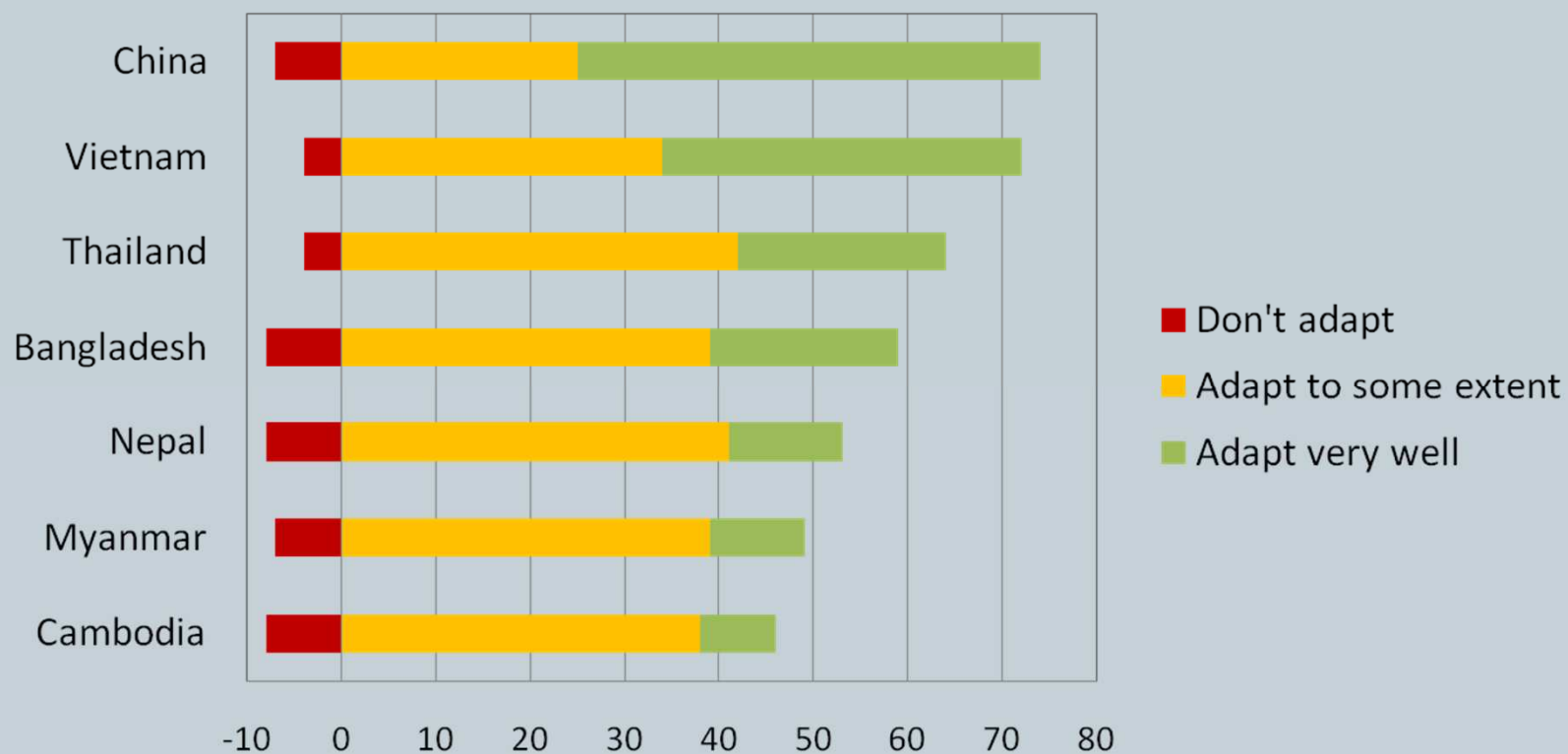
KAP Barometer

KAP Barometer Framework

The KAP Barometer is an indicator into which knowledge, attitudinal and behavioral measures have been incorporated to form a one-number score.

The KAP Barometer divides the general population into three groups based on their level of support towards migrants (knowledge and non-discriminatory attitudes).

This Framework was developed by Rapid Asia.

No	KNOWLEDGE	Yes
Negative	ATTITUDE	Positive
Negative	PRACTICE	Positive

KAP BAROMETER

Low Support	Moderate Support	High Support
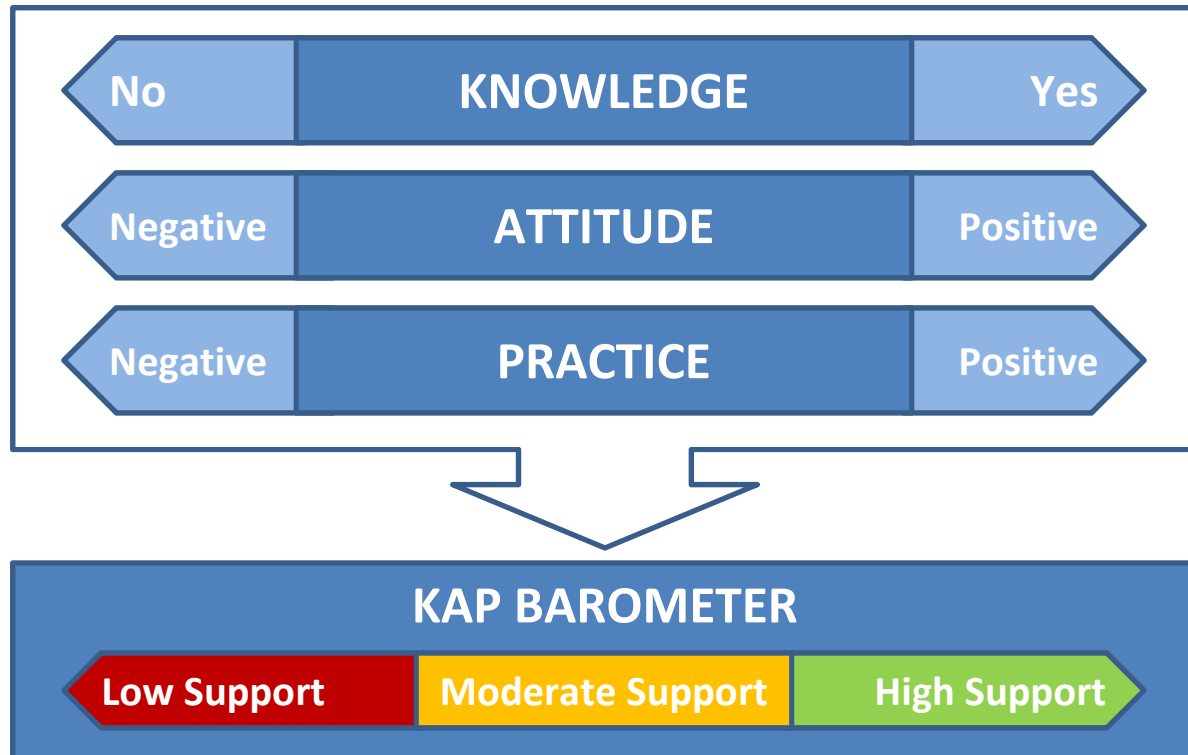
KAP segmentation

- The KAP Barometer score is a tool for comparing the level of support for migrant workers across different segments of the population:

  - In Singapore and Malaysia, the more highly educated people are, the more supportive they are of migrant workers.

  - In Korea, the older people are the more supportive they are of migrant workers.

  - In both Thailand and Malaysia there is a very distinct difference in support between regions whereas in Singapore and Korea the support across regions is quite homogeneous.

  - Across all four countries, those who know migrant workers personally, either through work or socially, show significantly higher levels of support.

KAP score by country

Proportion of respondents demonstrating 'support' for migrant workers

KAP Distribution

Thailand: 24
Malaysia: 19
Korea: 50
Singapore: 39

KAP Distribution values:
- Thailand: Low support 79, Moderate support 19, High support 2
- Malaysia: Low support 82, Moderate support 16, High support 2
- Korea: Low support 55, Moderate support 36, High support 9
- Singapore: Low support 60, Moderate support 31, High support 9

■ High support   ■ Moderate support
■ Low support
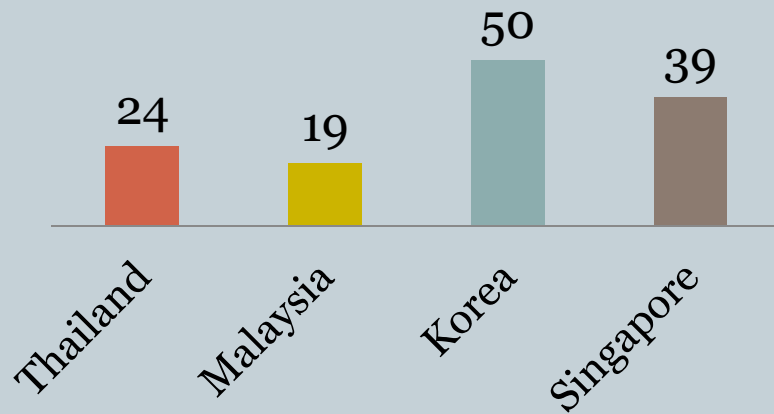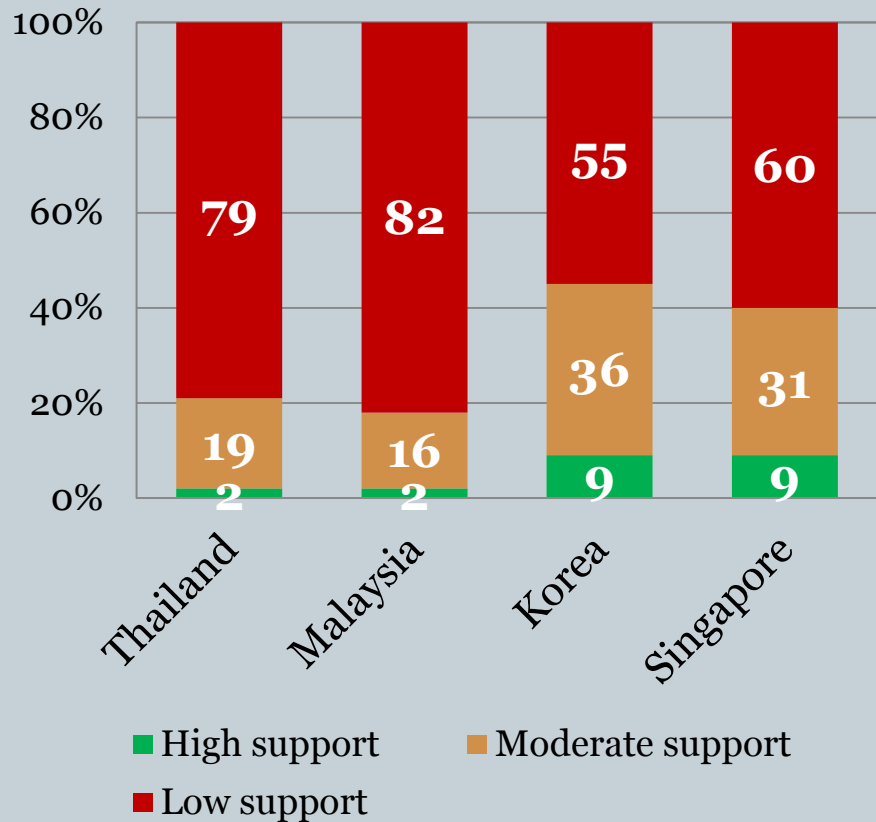
KAP score by education
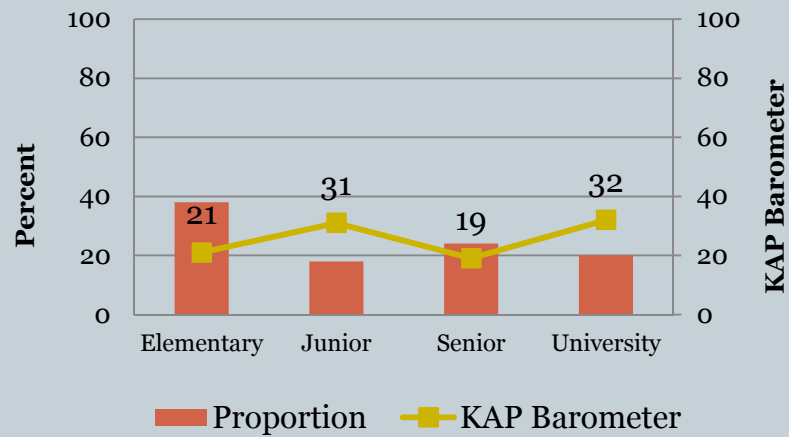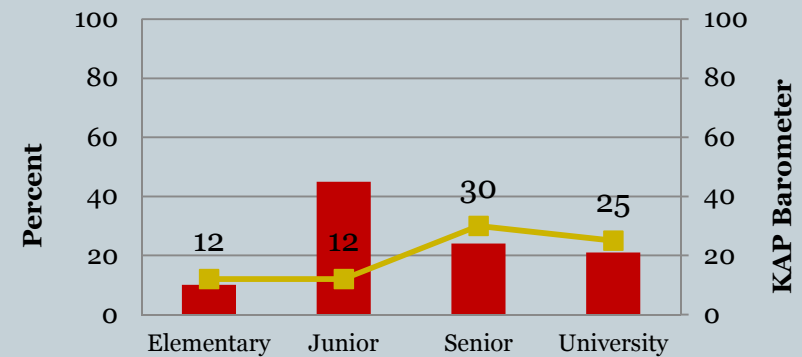
Thailand
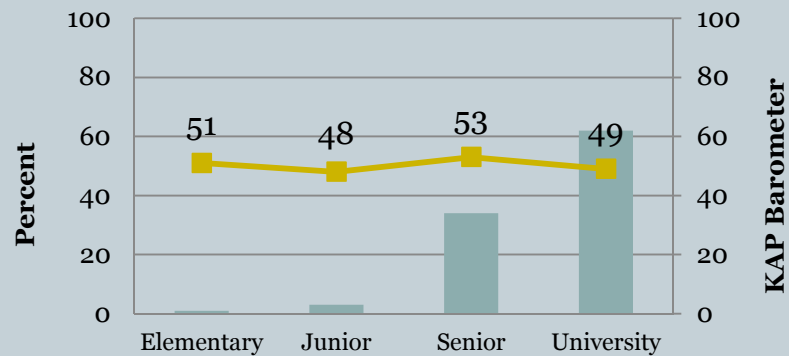
Malaysia
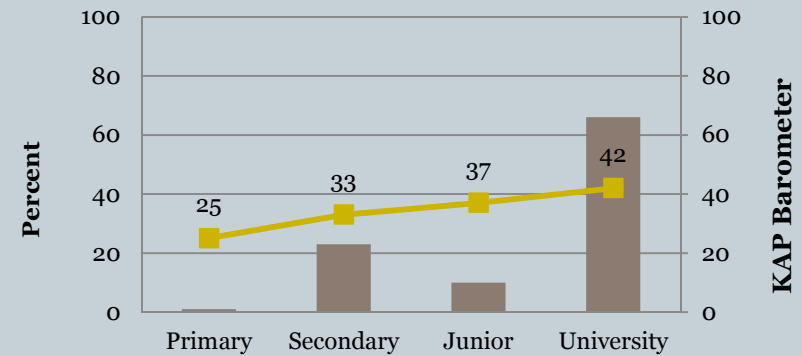
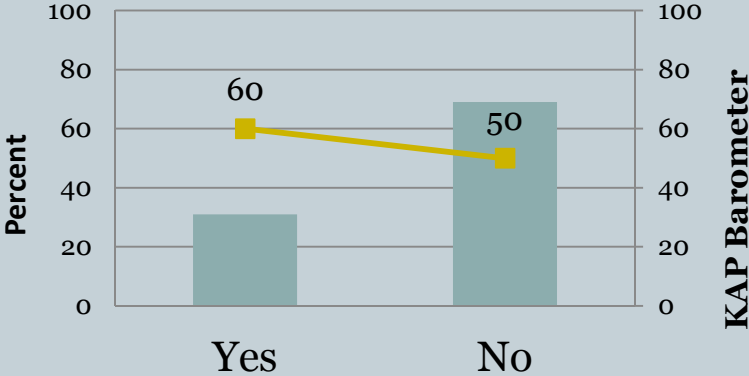**Korea**

Singapore

KAP score by age
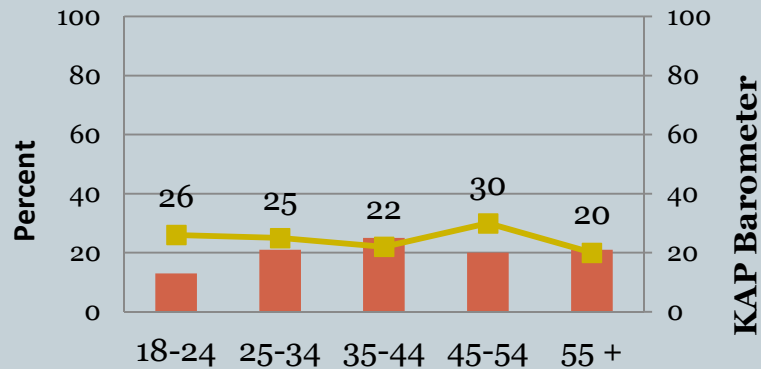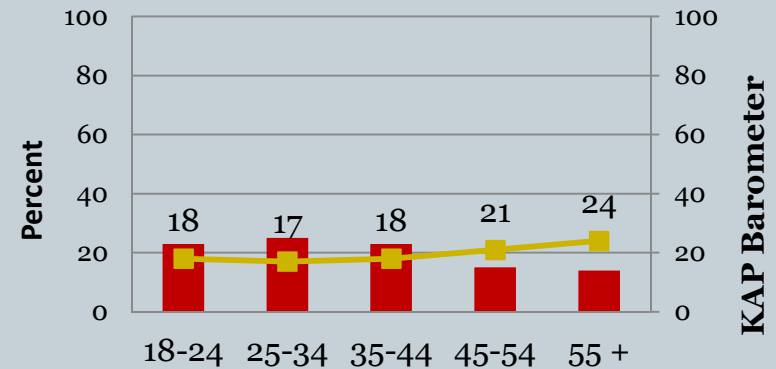
Thailand
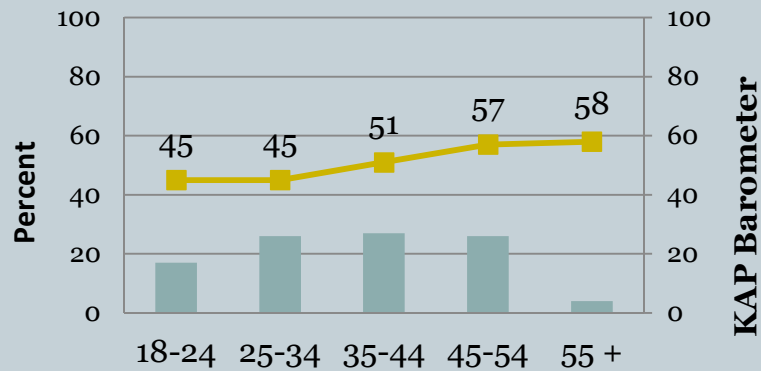
Malaysia

Korea

Singapore

KAP score by region

Thailand

Chiang Mai: 2
Surat Thani: 5
Samut Sakorn: 23
Bangkok: 35

Malaysia

Selangor: 13
Pahang: 18
KL: 18
Perak: 40

Korea

Urban: 50
Semi Rural: 51

Singapore

North east: 37
South east: 38
Central: 41
North west: 42
South west: 42
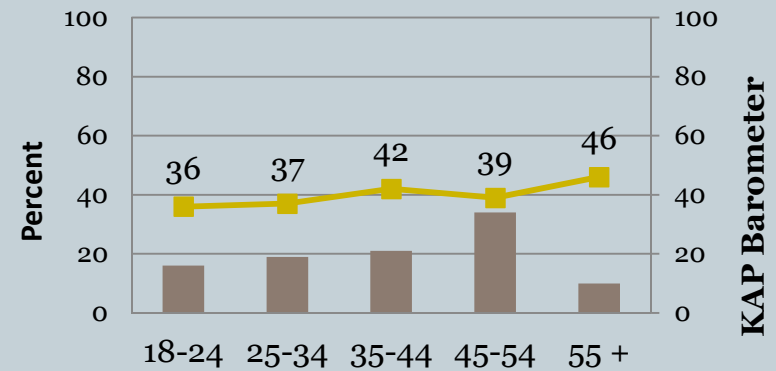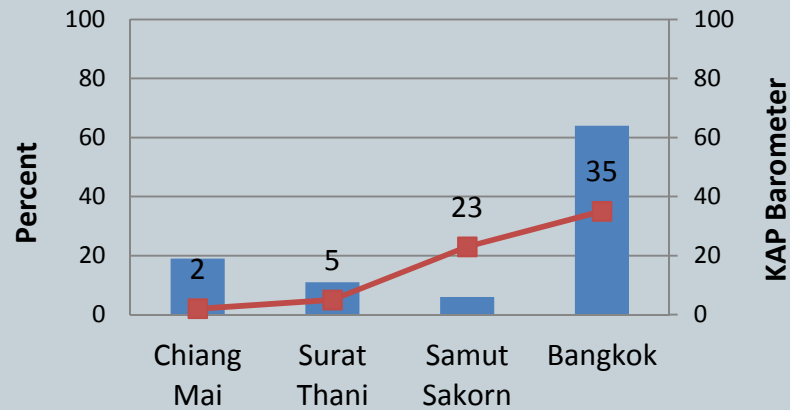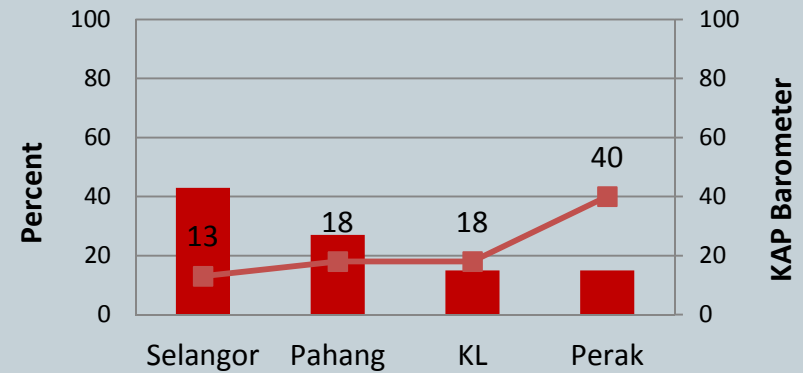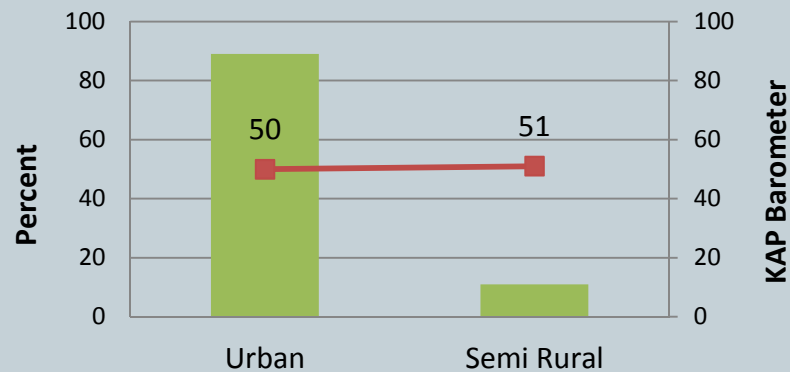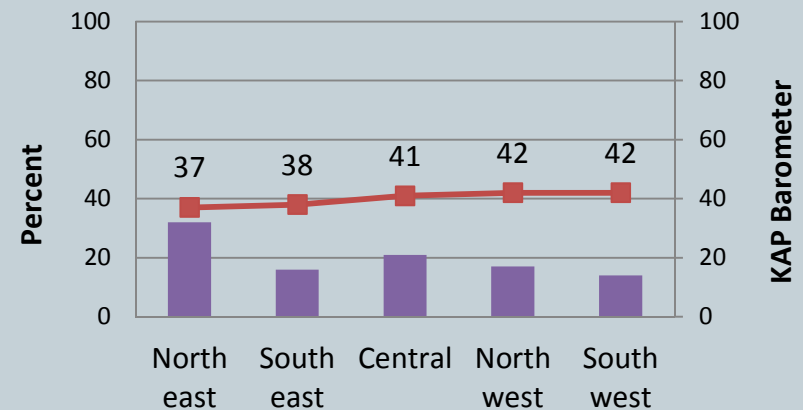
KAP score by interaction with migrants

Thailand

Percent / KAP Barometer

- Employed migrants
- Friend or colleague: 39
- Aquantance: 33
- No: 24

Malaysia

Percent / KAP Barometer

- Employed migrants: 40
- Friend or colleague: 32
- Aquantance: 19
- No: 8

Korea

Percent / KAP Barometer

- Employed migrants: 63
- Friend or colleague: 61
- Aquantance: 53
- No: 46

Singapore

Percent / KAP Barometer

- Employed...: 51
- Friend or...: 45
- Aquantance: 37
- No: 30
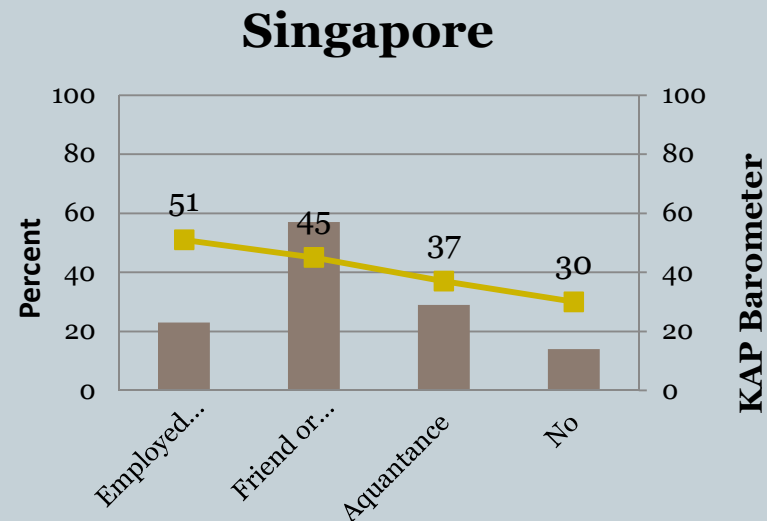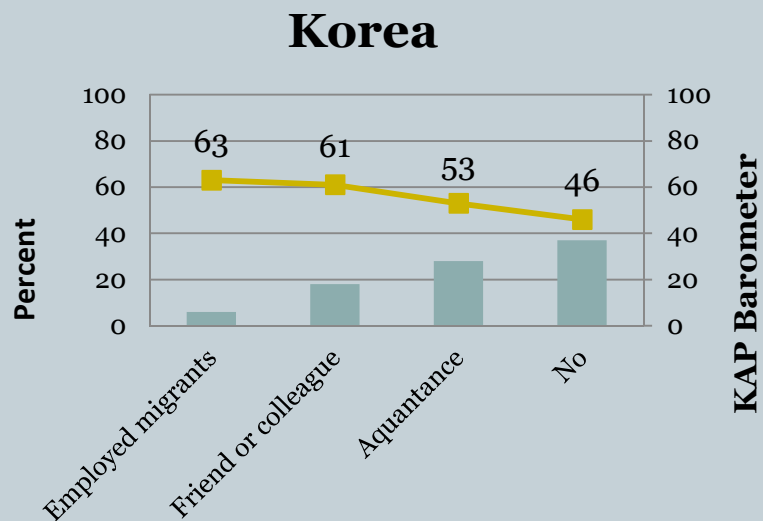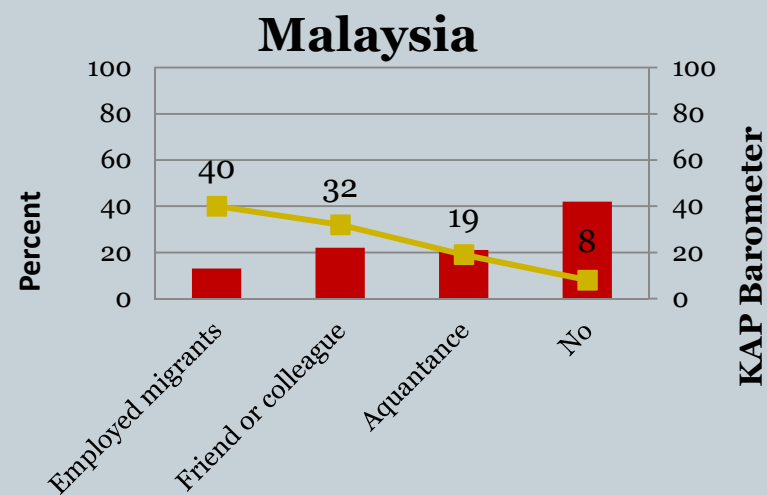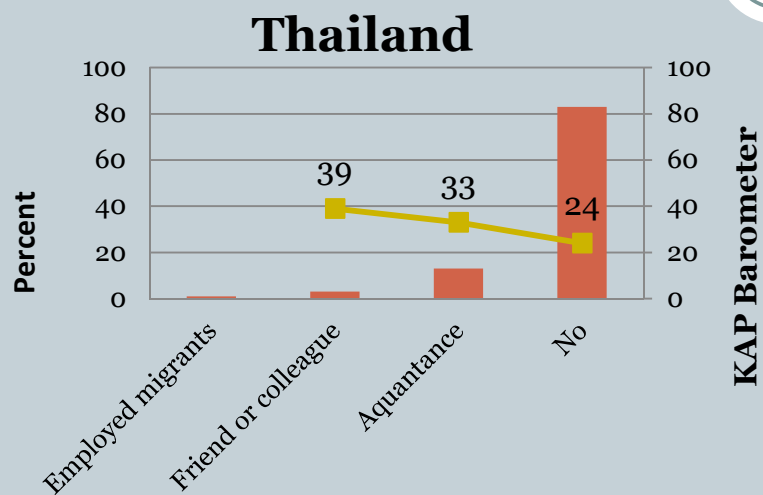
KAP score by 'employment decision-makers'

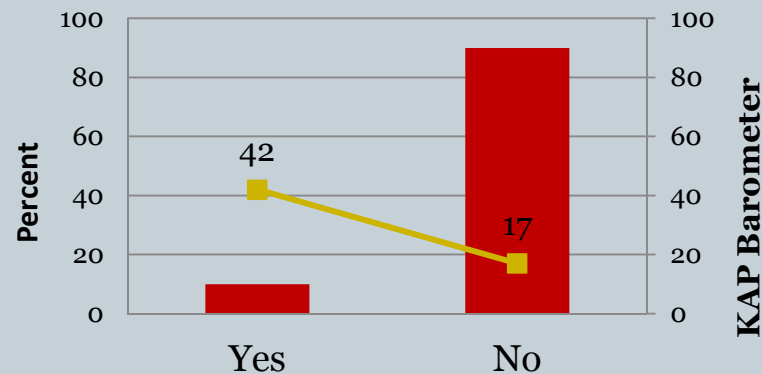**Thailand**

Malaysia

Korea

Singapore

Base: Those employed and working
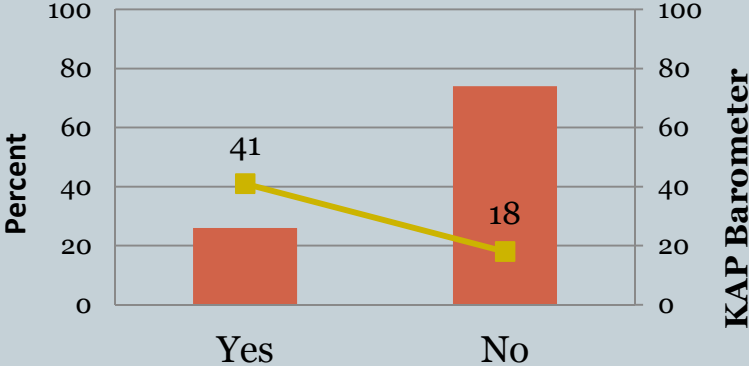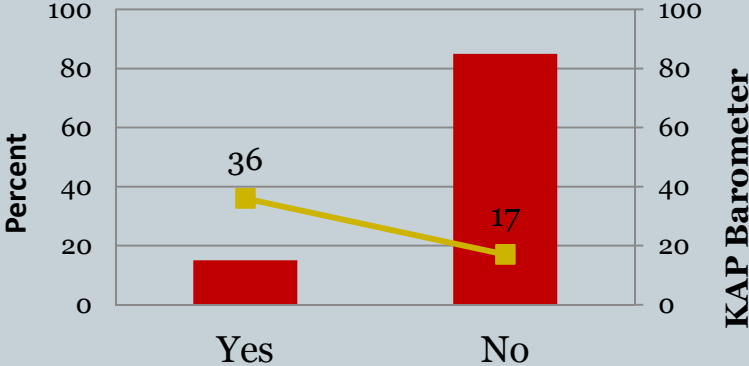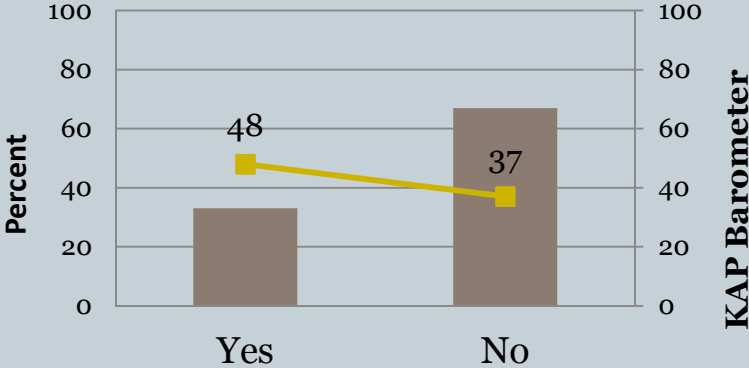
KAP score by employer of migrant domestic worker
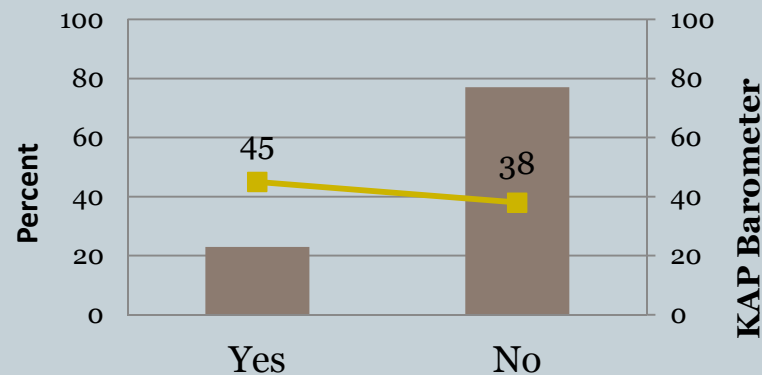
36
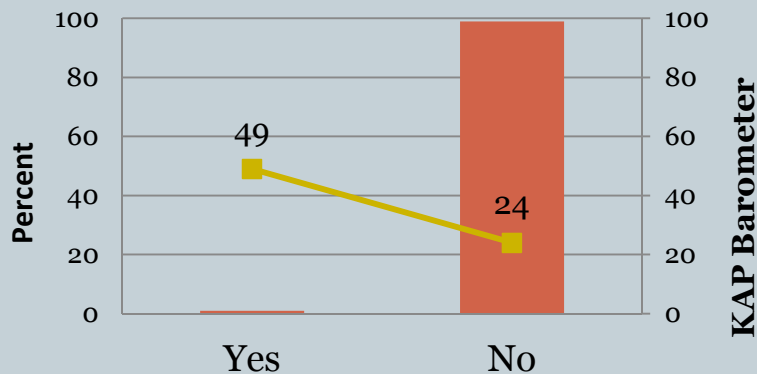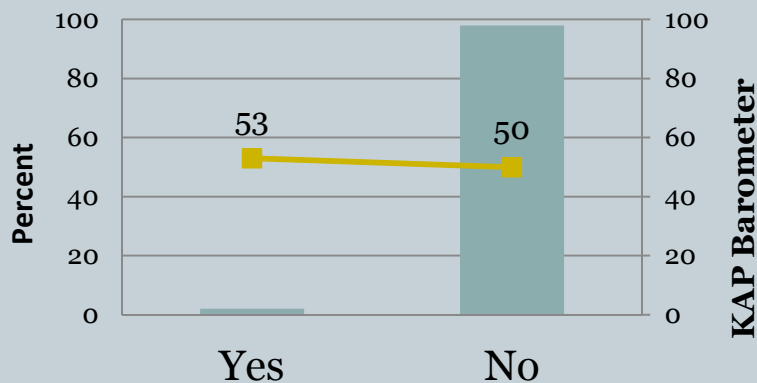
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