

Participatory Communication of Returned Indonesian Migrant Workers in Green Economy Entrepreneurship: A Bibliometric Study

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Abstract- This article examines the strategic role of participatory communication, post-return entrepreneurship of Indonesian migrant workers, and the green economy framework in promoting sustainable development initiatives. Grounded in theories of participatory communication and green entrepreneurship, the study applies a bibliometric approach to scientific publications from 2015 to 2024, sourced from the Dimensions database and mapped using VOSviewer. The analysis identifies research trends, author networks, and dominant keywords, revealing that the integration of participatory communication, post-migration entrepreneurship, and green economy remains limited and underexplored. It also highlights weak institutional connectivity among Indonesian academic communities, with minimal positioning of returned migrant workers as active agents of sustainable transformation. The findings suggest that participatory communication can significantly strengthen community engagement, enhance program ownership, and drive social change. Consequently, the study recommends adopting transformative and collaborative approaches in development communication to empower returned migrant workers in advancing local green economies. These insights contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 8 (decent work), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), and SDG 13 (climate action), by integrating migration into inclusive development strategies.

Keywords: Participatory Communication, Migrant Workers, Green Entrepreneurship, Green Economy, Bibliometric Analysis

Introduction

Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) play a vital role in national development through both remittances and skills transfer (Handoko, Sulaiman, Sugito, & Sabiq, 2024). In 2024 alone, remittances from PMIs reached IDR 253.3 trillion, positioning them as one of the largest contributors to Indonesia's foreign exchange reserves (Tempo.co, 2025). Beyond macroeconomic contributions, these funds hold significant potential to stimulate local economic growth upon workers' return. However, this potential is often underutilized.

A survey revealed that the majority of remittances are allocated to consumption, such as food (81.3 percent), education (70.9 percent), and housing-related expenses (47.3 percent), while only 5.8 percent is directed toward business investment, indicating a tendency to prioritize subsistence over productive use (Bisnis.com, 2023).

In the context of sustainable development, policy focus has shifted from merely protecting migrant workers abroad to supporting their reintegration through environmentally oriented entrepreneurship (UNDP Indonesia, 2022). The green economy framework, which emphasizes low emissions, resource efficiency, and social inclusion, offers a strategic opportunity for returned migrant workers to become local change agents. Empirical evidence from Indonesia shows that collective communication among returned migrant worker groups can spark innovative, locally rooted green enterprises.

Examples include *keripik rumput tipe* in Indramayu and *jinten*-based beverages and products in Lombok, which emerged from collaborative discussions and participatory decision-making within these groups (UMJ, 2024). Such cases illustrate how participatory communication can transform returning PMIs into active economic actors while fostering environmental sustainability.

Participatory communication facilitates horizontal dialogue, strengthens community capacity, and enables collective problem-solving (Subedi & Karki, 2022; Tufte, 2022). In the case of returned migrant workers, it shifts their role from passive recipients of aid to proactive agents of local development, increasing the likelihood that reintegration efforts, especially those linked to green entrepreneurship, will be sustainable (Dwita, Sjuchro, Hidayat, & Sjafirah, 2022; Fitriyani & Rachmawati, 2024).

Despite these theoretical and practical indications, few studies integrate participatory communication, migrant entrepreneurship, and the green economy into a unified analytical framework. Migration research still predominantly focuses on worker protection, while sustainability studies often overlook vulnerable groups such as returned PMIs (Gong & Zhuang, 2024; Sulistiani et al., 2023). Yet bridging these domains is essential to realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 8 (decent work), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), and SDG 13 (climate action).

A synergistic approach that combines entrepreneurship, communication, and ecological transformation requires interdisciplinary collaboration connecting social sciences, environmental studies, and public policy (Ahmad et al., 2023). Studies from China, for instance, demonstrate that aligning green policies with migrant mobilization can enhance inclusive rural development (Gong & Zhuang, 2024). Conversely, the absence of cross-sector collaboration frequently undermines community empowerment programs (Sulistiani et al., 2023).

Recognizing these gaps, this study conducts a bibliometric analysis of scientific publications from 2015 to 2024 to examine scholarly discourse on participatory communication, entrepreneurship among returned Indonesian migrant workers, and the green economy. Using the Dimensions database and visual mapping via VOSviewer, the study identifies trends, networks, and research gaps. The findings aim to inform more inclusive development communication strategies and to reposition returned PMIs as active contributors to sustainable local economies.

Theoretical Frameworks

Participatory Communication

Participatory communication emphasizes the active involvement of communities in message creation, agenda setting, and collective decision-making. Emerging as a critique of top-down development models, it fosters horizontal dialogue, critical consciousness, and shared ownership of development initiatives (Sulistiani & Syarifuddin, 2024; Subedi & Karki, 2022).

Grounded in Paulo Freire's theory of dialogical communication, this approach treats communities as active agents rather than passive recipients. Tufte (2022) highlights its value in ensuring that development communication reflects the voices and realities of those directly affected. Such inclusivity strengthens social cohesion and improves program effectiveness.

Empirical evidence from Indonesia supports the transformative potential of participatory communication in migrant contexts. A study by Sulaiman, Sugito, and Sabiq (2017) in Sidaurip and

Karangtawang villages of Cilacap district applied Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) to engage both returned and prospective migrant workers in village development planning. Through focus group discussions, interviews, and SWOT analysis, the process not only increased community participation but also encouraged individuals to reconsider migration as the primary livelihood option. This finding illustrates how participatory approaches can align empowerment programs with local aspirations, enabling communities to channel human and financial resources into sustainable village-based livelihoods.

For returned migrant workers, participatory communication bridges policy and grassroots experience, allowing reintegration programs to align with local needs (Octavianti, Mulyana, Sugiana, El Karimah & Koswara, 2021; Nizal & Sinduwiatmo, 2022; Fitriyani & Rachmawati, 2024). However, many initiatives still rely on informative models, lacking genuine dialogue (IOM, 2023; Sulistiani et al., 2023). Community-driven practices, such as the Moroccan diaspora's agroecological efforts, demonstrate the transformative potential of this approach (Urbanet-IOM, 2024).

Strengthening participatory communication at the community level is closely linked to communication patterns within migrant worker families. Research by Mulyana, Zein, and Setiaman (2017) in Sliyeg district, Indramayu, found that the family's physical and social environment significantly influences the quality of interactions between parents and children in migrant households. Effective communication styles, particularly those fostering mutual understanding, help maintain social bonds and trust during periods of separation. Such interpersonal dynamics contribute to the social capital necessary for community-driven initiatives, including reintegration programs that rely on collective engagement.

In this context, participatory communication not only serves as a development tool but also as a mechanism for empowerment, especially in promoting sustainable local economies. It directly contributes to SDG 10 (reduced inequalities) and SDG 16 (inclusive institutions).

Entrepreneurship of Returned Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI)

Returned PMIs possess remittances, skills, and experience that can be channeled into entrepreneurship. However, they often face reintegration challenges such as weak networks, limited market access, and inadequate business support. According to Law No. 18 of 2017, returnees are entitled to empowerment programs, including entrepreneurship training.

Entrepreneurship offers not only a livelihood path but also social reintegration and self-actualization (Ismanto et al., 2022). Yet, many returned PMIs fail to sustain businesses due to poor financial literacy and insufficient linkages to entrepreneurial ecosystems (Handoko et al., 2024; Rahmawati et al., 2024). Community-based organizations, such as the Migrant Workers' Citizen Forum, have shown success in offering psychosocial support and business development spaces (Saleh et al., 2022).

Green entrepreneurship, in particular, holds potential for returned PMIs, focusing on sustainable sectors like organic farming, renewable energy, and waste recycling (Gong & Zhuang, 2024). Realizing this potential requires participatory approaches that ensure interventions reflect the needs and capacities of migrant communities.

Recent empirical evidence further illustrates the entrepreneurial resilience of returned PMIs. A longitudinal survey conducted by Migrant CARE (2024) tracked 249 returnees who had established businesses between 2018 and 2021. The findings revealed that 71 percent, or 180 enterprises, remained operational after three years, with 98 percent continuing to meet local market demands. Notably, 72 percent of these entrepreneurs were women, underscoring the significant role of female returnees in sustaining microenterprises. While some expressed intentions to remigrate, many persisted in running their businesses, positioning these ventures as potential pioneers and role models for other returnees. Such evidence reinforces the need for targeted policy support, including access to finance, market expansion programs, and gender-sensitive entrepreneurship training.

Green Economy and Its Relevance for Returned Indonesian Migrant Workers

The green economy promotes low-carbon, resource-efficient, and socially inclusive development (Söderholm, 2020). ASEAN's Green Transformation Strategy projects major

investments and job creation, offering an opportunity for returned PMIs to participate in environmentally conscious entrepreneurship (ASEAN Secretariat, 2024).

Despite their potential, returned migrants are often overlooked in green development agendas. Equipped with remittances and global exposure, they can be agents of local transformation, if supported with training, green financing, and institutional coordination (Maria et al., 2024; ILO, 2023).

Participatory communication plays a pivotal role in embedding sustainability values and mobilizing collective engagement in green initiatives. Integrating social, ecological, and economic aspects, this framework positions returned PMIs not just as recipients of aid but as key actors in achieving SDGs, especially SDG 8 (decent work), SDG 12 (responsible consumption), and SDG 13 (climate action).

Material and Methodology

This study applies a bibliometric approach to examine scholarly discourse on participatory communication, green economy, and entrepreneurship among returned Indonesian migrant workers (PMIs) over the period 2015–2024. Bibliometrics enables the quantitative and visual analysis of publication trends, keyword relationships, and author networks across disciplines (Öztürk et al., 2024). Given the interdisciplinary nature of communication, migration, and sustainability, this method is particularly effective in revealing conceptual linkages, identifying dominant actors, and mapping research gaps in an evidence-based manner.

The primary data source is Dimensions.ai, selected for its extensive multidisciplinary coverage, which includes both indexed and open-access publications. Compared to Scopus or Web of Science, Dimensions offers broader regional representation, particularly of Southeast Asian scholarship, and provides free, up-to-date access to bibliographic records.

A single Boolean search query was used to retrieve publications at the intersection of the target concepts: ("migrant worker" OR "Indonesian migrant") AND entrepreneurship AND communication AND green economy AND participatory

This query was intentionally constructed to capture only those works explicitly engaging with all major thematic components of the study. Filters were applied to restrict results to the period 2015–2024, journal articles, and subject areas relevant to communication, culture, marketing, and economics.

The search results were exported in CSV format containing bibliographic metadata such as titles, authors, affiliations, keywords, abstracts, and citation counts. Initial retrieval yielded a broader dataset, which was then refined through a two-stage screening process. The inclusion criteria were: (1) articles must explicitly address participatory communication in connection with both green economy and migrant entrepreneurship; (2) the context must involve Indonesian migrant workers or comparable Southeast Asian cases with clear relevance to Indonesia. Exclusion criteria removed publications that discussed migration without communication or sustainability elements, or communication without direct reference to returned migrant entrepreneurship.

The final dataset comprised 43 publications meeting all criteria. These were analyzed using VOSviewer version 1.6.20, a specialized software for constructing and visualizing bibliometric networks. Four analytical dimensions were applied: (1) publication trend mapping to identify annual output; (2) keyword co-occurrence analysis to detect thematic clusters; (3) citation network analysis to reveal influential works and authors; and (4) overlay visualization to highlight the temporal evolution of research themes. VOSviewer was chosen over alternatives such as CiteSpace due to its user-friendly interface, compatibility with Dimensions data formats, and strong visualization capabilities for network mapping.

This methodological design enables the identification of underexplored research areas, dominant institutions, and emerging thematic trends. It reflects the complexity of interdisciplinary knowledge production and provides a systematic foundation for developing inclusive, sustainable reintegration strategies for returned PMIs.

Results and Discussion

The bibliometric study analyzed 43 publications that were retrieved using Boolean 3. These publications specifically integrate the themes of returned migrant worker entrepreneurship, participatory communication, and the green economy. The analysis includes publication trends, keyword co-occurrence, and citation networks to map the scholarly landscape.

Publication Trend Analysis

The bibliometric study analyzed 43 publications retrieved using a single Boolean search that integrates the themes of returned migrant worker entrepreneurship, participatory communication, and the green economy. The analysis covered publication trends, keyword co-occurrence, and institutional networks to map the scholarly landscape.

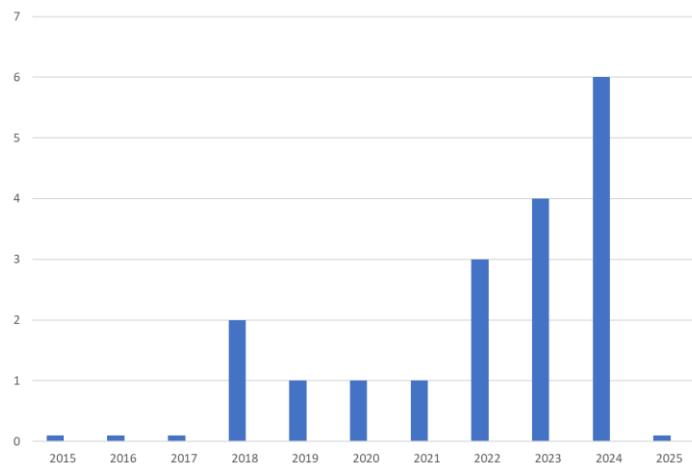


Figure 1. Number of Publications on Participatory Communication of Migrant Workers towards a Green Economy, 2015–2024

Source: Dimensions, 2025

The publication trend from 2015 to 2024 shows a gradual but significant increase after 2018, with notable acceleration beginning in 2021 and peaking in 2024 (Figure 1). This trajectory aligns with the global consolidation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a guiding framework for development policy (ILO, 2023; Zhang et al., 2022). The spike in 2023–2024 may also reflect heightened policy and academic interest in post-pandemic economic recovery, particularly the role of green entrepreneurship in strengthening local resilience (ASEAN Secretariat, 2024).

Despite this growth, contributions from Indonesian scholars remain minimal. The majority of publications are authored by researchers from Europe and East Asia, suggesting that Indonesia is still underrepresented in the scholarly discourse (Gong & Zhuang, 2024; Rahmanto et al., 2024). Strengthening national research capacity in this area is critical to ensuring that global academic debates adequately reflect Indonesia's socio-economic and cultural realities.

While this underrepresentation partly reflects broader trends in global academic publishing, structural factors within Indonesia also play a role. Limited research funding, language barriers in publishing in high-impact journals, and the prioritization of short-term applied research over long-term theoretical development have constrained scholarly output in interdisciplinary fields (Salager-Meyer, 2014). In addition, weak institutional linkages between universities and migrant worker communities hinder the co-creation of research agendas that could bridge academic discourse with grassroots needs.



Figure 2. Organizations and Countries Publishing on Participatory Communication of Migrant Workers towards a Green Economy, 2015–2024
Source: VosViewer, 2025

The institutional collaboration map (Figure 2) reveals a diverse global network, with key nodes including Leeds Beckett University, McGill University, Southeast University, and the University of Huelva. However, Indonesian universities and research institutions are absent from the core clusters, indicating a limited role in shaping the global knowledge network on this topic. This gap highlights the need for deliberate strategies to integrate Indonesian institutions into international research consortia, such as through joint projects, visiting scholar programs, and co-authored publications (Zhao & Liu, 2022).

The observed patterns suggest both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, the upward trend in publications shows that the integration of migration, participatory communication, and green economy is an emerging research frontier. On the other hand, the lack of strong representation from Indonesia underscores the need for targeted interventions. Policy actors, including the Ministry of Manpower and the Ministry of Research and Technology, could facilitate multi-stakeholder platforms that connect researchers, NGOs, and migrant worker associations. These platforms could serve as incubators for green entrepreneurship projects grounded in participatory communication principles (UNDP Indonesia, 2022; Söderholm, 2020).

From a research standpoint, future studies could benefit from comparative designs that analyze both domestic and international cases of migrant-led green enterprises. Such approaches would deepen theoretical understanding and produce context-sensitive policy recommendations. Embedding participatory methods in these studies is essential to ensure that the voices of returned migrant workers directly inform program design and evaluation.

Keyword Co-Occurrence Analysis

Keyword mapping reveals six thematic clusters, but conceptual linkages among "participatory communication," "green economy," and "migrant entrepreneurship" remain weak. While terms such as "dignity," "NGO," and "sustainability" appear frequently, core themes of this study are not prominent, indicating that scholarly discourse still treats these domains separately (Rahmanto et al., 2024).



Figure 3. Keywords Related to Participatory Communication of Migrant Workers towards a Green Economy, 2015–2024
Source: VosViewer, 2025

The keyword “dignity” is closely linked to “NGO” and “loneliness,” reflecting psychosocial concerns in labor and migration. “Work” connects with “nature,” pointing to ecological aspects in labor studies. However, keywords directly referring to Indonesian migrants, participatory communication, and green entrepreneurship are poorly represented.

This fragmentation confirms that participatory communication in the context of post-migration green entrepreneurship remains a research gap. As suggested by Tufte (2022) and Subedi & Karki (2022), participatory methods can empower communities, yet they are rarely integrated into green economy studies. Future research should incorporate terms such as “climate-smart entrepreneurship” or “rural green innovation” to strengthen coherence.

Citation Network Analysis

The citation network shows 56 authors grouped in small, weakly connected clusters, indicating low levels of cross-citation and collaboration. No dominant authors or epistemic communities have emerged, suggesting that the integration of the three themes is still at an early stage (Ahmad et al., 2023; Öztürk et al., 2024).



Figure 4. Citation Analysis of Participatory Communication of Migrant Workers towards a Green Economy, 2015–2024
Source: VosViewer, 2025

The overlay visualization shows newer contributors like Hamdan Hamdan and Kyriak Glyptou (in yellow), while established authors like Ana Bazac and Philip Leonard appear in purple. Nonetheless, few have published extensively on the combined themes of migration, communication, and sustainability.

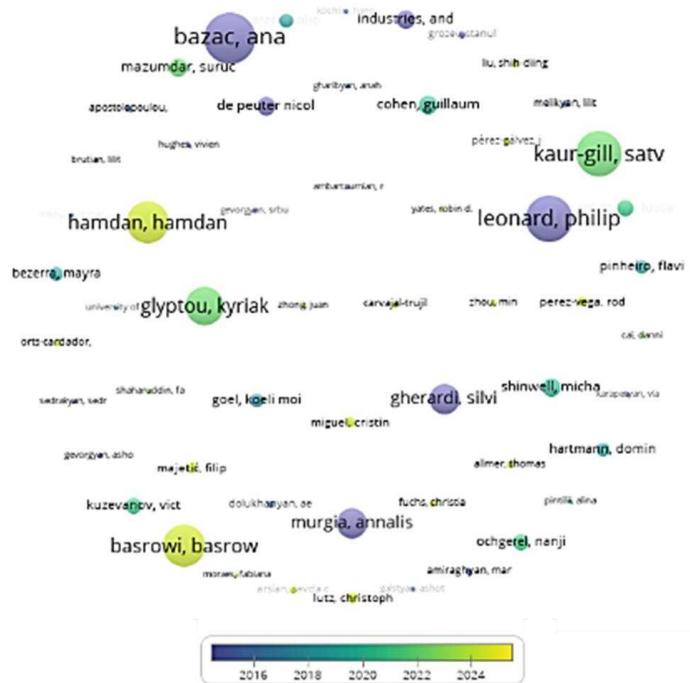


Figure 5. Overlay Visualization of Citation Analysis on Participatory Communication of Migrant Workers towards a Green Economy, 2015–2024

Source: VosViewer, 2025

The absence of Indonesian scholars in central citation nodes presents both a challenge and opportunity. Regional collaborations and research funding could help Indonesian academics take a leading role in this emerging field. As Kanbach et al. (2024) argue, international collaboration significantly enhances visibility and scholarly impact in interdisciplinary domains such as social entrepreneurship and green transition.

For policymakers, these findings underscore the importance of embedding participatory communication in green entrepreneurship programs for returned PMIs. Government agencies could create multi-sectoral task forces linking ministries, universities, and civil society to design integrated reintegration pathways. This approach aligns with the SDG principle of “leaving no one behind” and ensures that returned migrant workers are not merely economic actors but also co-creators of sustainable community development (UNDP, 2022; ILO, 2023).

Conclusion

This study has explored the intersection of participatory communication, returned Indonesian migrant worker entrepreneurship, and the green economy through a bibliometric analysis of 43 publications from 2015 to 2024. Drawing on data from the Dimensions database and visual mapping with VOSviewer, the analysis reveals a growing scholarly interest in this area, particularly after 2016, in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Despite this growth, the integration of the three core themes remains limited and fragmented. The keyword analysis highlights weak conceptual linkages, while the citation network shows dispersed scholarly contributions with little interdisciplinary collaboration. Indonesian academic representation remains marginal, signaling the need for greater local engagement.

These gaps present both a challenge and an opportunity. Conceptually, there is a pressing need to build integrative frameworks that bridge participatory communication, migrant empowerment, and ecological entrepreneurship. Methodologically, the adoption of interdisciplinary and participatory approaches, such as community-based participatory research (CBPR), could better capture local contexts and needs. Institutionally, stronger collaboration between researchers, policymakers, and

grassroots actors is vital to position returned PMIs not as passive beneficiaries but as agents of local green transformation.

The findings suggest that empowering returned migrant workers through participatory strategies within green economic frameworks can contribute meaningfully to achieving SDG 8 (decent work), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), and SDG 13 (climate action). Indonesia, with its large population of returning migrants, is well positioned to lead regionally in this area, provided academic, institutional, and policy ecosystems are aligned toward this goal.

In conclusion, a shift is needed, from fragmented and reactive approaches to integrative and participatory ones, to fully leverage the transformative potential of returned Indonesian migrant workers in building resilient, inclusive, and sustainable local economies.

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