From Residents to Citizens: A Case Study on the Social Integration of New Immigrants in Taiwan.

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RESPONDING TO REVIEWERS

Q: What reasons make you choose this topic since this project is too common to see?

Page 3 of this research highlights the constant increase in Taiwan's new immigrant population under the trend of migration. As Taiwan has stepped into an aging society, human resources become increasingly valuable. In this context, the growing number of new immigrants represents an important source of social capital for Taiwanese society. As more new immigrants settle in Taiwan, some of them advocate for a more complete framework which they hope their voices of soul can be heard and adopted into the current new immigrants basic human right. Since there has been a gap between current stage of governmental assistance and new immigrants. The purpose of this study aiming to unravel the gaps between current Taiwanese society and new immigrants.

Q: To what extent all these interviewees generalized to the population of new immigrants?

The limitations of this study, outlined in Chapter 1 shows the hardship of finding sufficient interviewees for a comprehensive data availability due to a lack of access. However, as explained in Chapter 3, this research established several selection criteria—such as gender, nationality, and length of residence in Taiwan—to ensure that the participants who were included align with the focus and purpose of the study. These criteria were designed to enhance the accountability and credibility of the findings despite the smaller sample size. Moreover, the status of this research serves as an exploring research, aiming not to provide exhaustive generalizations but to offer meaningful insights and directions for understanding the experiences and challenges faced by new immigrants in Taiwan.

Q: Why didn't you mention the rest 60% of new immigrants but only referring the new immigrants from Southeast Asia?

After receiving feedback from reviewers, this study has further clarified the rationale behind the selection of the research population. According to statistics from the Ministry of the Interior, 60.47% of new immigrants in Taiwan originate from China, while most of the remaining new immigrant population comes from Southeast Asian countries. This study focuses specifically on Southeast Asian new immigrants because they differ significantly from Taiwanese society in terms of culture, language, and value systems. These differences create unique challenges and adaptation processes that are distinct from those experienced by immigrants from culturally similar regions. By focusing on Southeast Asian new immigrants as the primary group, this research aims to more clearly examine their migration experiences, the difficulties they encounter in adapting to a culturally different society, and the factors influencing their decision to settle permanently and integrate into Taiwanese society.

From Residents to Citizens: A Case Study on the Social Integration of New Immigrants in Taiwan

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Abstract

With the continuous increase in global migration, immigration has become one of the most prominent international issues. This study focuses on the social integration of new immigrants in Taiwan, exploring whether they are able to integrate smoothly into Taiwanese society in social, cultural, and economic dimensions. As of now, new immigrants account for approximately 2.5% of Taiwan's total population, meaning that 2.5 out of every 100 people are new immigrants. With the increasing number of new immigrants, they have progressively become an integral component of Taiwan's cultural, social, and economic fabric. Consequently, examining their adaptation processes, challenges to integration, and lived experiences have emerged as a critical area of inquiry for contemporary Taiwanese society.

Thus, this study aims to investigate the key factors contributing to the difficulties faced by new immigrants who have lived in Taiwan for long term yet continue to encounter barriers to social integration. A mixed-methods was adopted, combining qualitative in-depth interviews with quantitative questionnaire surveys to present a comprehensive picture of the social determinants of new immigrants in Taiwan. . The data from the interviews were analyzed to discover potential factors shaping social integration, whereas the quantitative questionnaires served to quantify and evaluate the level of social integration among new immigrants.

The research findings reveal that the Southeast Asian participants primarily migrated to Taiwan for economic reasons at the first beginning. However, current policies toward new immigrants in Taiwan are largely oriented toward promoting social integration, with limited support in economic aspects. The study suggests that by incorporating new immigrants' perspectives and enhancing economic assistance and welfare, the government can help improve their stability and opportunities for self-realization, while simultaneously contributing to the development of Taiwan's labor market and promoting mutually advantageous outcomes for new immigrants and Taiwanese society.

Keywords: social integration, new immigrants, welfare measures, immigrant policies

《從居民到公民：台灣新住民社會融合之個案研究》

王維婷

文藻外語大學，2026 年

摘要

隨著全球移民人數持續上升，移民議題已成為備受關注的國際焦點之一。本研究聚焦於台灣新住民的社會融合情形，探討其在社會、文化與經濟等層面上是否能順利融入台灣社會。截至目前為止，新住民約占台灣總人口的 2.5%，亦即平均每百人中即有 2.5 人為新住民。隨著其人數逐年增加，新住民已逐漸成為台灣文化、社會與經濟發展中不可忽視的重要群體。因此，關注新住民的適應情形及其融入困難，並理解其需求與觀點，已成為當前社會亟需重視的課題。

本研究旨在探討新住民即便長期居住於台灣，卻仍面臨社會融合困難的關鍵因素，並透過系統性的調查與分析，理解其在融入過程中所遭遇的挑戰與阻礙。研究採用質性與量化並行之方法，結合深入訪談與問卷調查，希望呈現新住民在台社會融合的現況。訪談部分旨在探索影響新住民社會融合的現有及潛在因素；問卷則用以量化評估其融合程度。研究結果顯示，受訪的東南亞的新住民的確是以經濟因素為主要考量而選擇來台生活。然而，現行台灣針對新住民的相關政策則偏向促進社會融合為導向，對於經濟支持的面向相對不足。本研究發現，若能從新住民的觀點出發，強化經濟層面的協助與福利措施，將有助於提升其生活穩定性與自我實現機會，並同時促進台灣勞動力市場的多元性發展，方能達成社會與經濟雙贏的局面。

關鍵字:社會融合，新住民，福利措施，新住民政策

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Unlike visitors, immigrants are likely to live in Taiwan over the long term, thus, it represents a new source of human capital under the situation of aging society which Taiwan possess. In addition, it is also vital to treat them as citizens rather than residents. Southeast Asian immigrants are considered as the main foreign residents in this island. The transition from exclusion to identification will involve with social actions or policies in facilitating social cohesion and integration. Once inclusiveness issues are unsolved, in order to fight for personal well-being both physically and mentally, it is very possible to lead to a social challenge and debate if the institutional adaptation cannot achieve.[1]

1.1 The Trend of World Migration

Long-term data indicates that international migration is not uniform across the world but is shaped by economic, geographic, demographic, racial, cultural and other factors, resulting in distinct migration patterns, such as migration "corridors" developed over many years.

More than 40% of international migrants worldwide in 2020 were from Asia, nearly 20% of all international migrants originated from six Asian countries, including India (occupying the largest country of origin), China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Philippines, and Afghanistan. The second-largest country of origin was Mexico, and the Russian Federation was third. Several other European countries have a notable scale of immigrants, such as Ukraine, Poland, the United Kingdom, Romania, and Germany.

Migration corridors represent an accumulation of migratory movements over time and provide a snapshot of how migration patterns have evolved into significant foreign-born

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[1] Lisa F. Berkman, Thomas Glass, Ilona Brissette, and Teresa Seeman., "From Social Integration to Health: Durkheim in the New Millennium.," *Social Science & Medicine* 51, no. 6 (2000).

populations in specific destination countries.
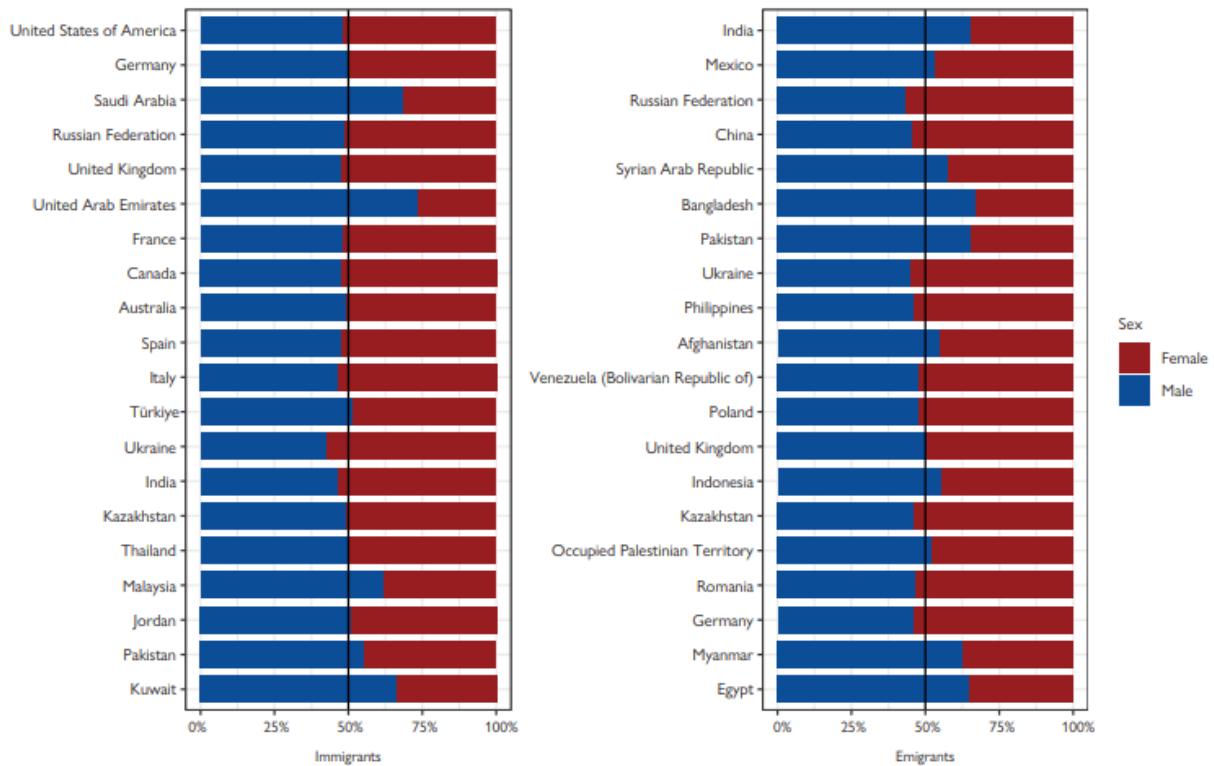
Figure 1 International migrants, by sex, top 20 destination countries(left) and origin countries (right)-proportion*

The largest corridors tend to be from developing countries to larger economies such as the United States, France, the Russian Federation, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia that are the top twenty corridors.[2]

1.2 Asian Immigration in a World Scope

The integration of locals and immigrants has been a lasting issue since globalization began. According to a 2025 United Nations report, inequality has emerged as a particularly

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[2] *M. and L.A. Oucho McAuliffe, "World Migration Report 2024", International Organization for Migration (IOM) (Geneva, 2024).*

serious global issue. For many Asians, migration functions as a survival strategy in response to economic and social disparities.

Take the world as an example, based on the World Migration Report from the UN. Until 2020, there were roughly 281 million international immigrants around the world, which equals 3.6 percent of the global population. According to the UN database, the Asia region contains over 40 percent of the world's international immigrants, which is around 115 million people. Also, nearly more than half (69 million) of immigrants live in other Asian countries.

1.3 Composition of Immigrants in Taiwan

Narrowing down the scope to Taiwan. In Taiwan, the population of immigrants was approaching 570 thousand, which accounts for 2.5 percent of the total population of Taiwan, based on the report from the Ministry of the Interior, R.O.C. Among the 570 thousand immigrants in Taiwan, females occupy 91.2% of the total number of immigrants with the age between 35 to 54 years old. According to statistics from the Ministry of the Interior, by the end of June 2024, the number of new immigrants in the Republic of China (Taiwan) had nearly reached 600,000, with their children exceeding 470,000. These groups are a key focus of government services.

Taiwan, as a multicultural society, consists of a variety of immigrants from other countries. Based on the statistics from the Ministry of the Interior, R.O.C., it shows most of the immigrants are from China with a percentage of 60.47% while the other immigrants from Vietnam(19.98%), Indonesia(5.37%), Hong Kong and Macao area(3.76%), Philippines (2.01%), Thailand(1.74%), Cambodia(0.72%), Japan(1.00%), Korea(0.38%), and others(4.56%).

Table 1 Composition of immigrants in Taiwan

Rank	Country of Origin	Proportion of Immigrants
1	China	60.47%

2	Vietnam	19.98%
3	Indonesia	5.37%
4	Hong Kong and Macao	3.76%
5	Philippines	2.01%
6	Thailand	1.74%
7	Japan	1.00%
8	Cambodia	0.72%
9	Korea	0.38%
10	other	4.56%

Source: Ministry of Interior, accessed on Sep. 2025, organized by the researcher

1.4 Legal Framework for Immigrants in Taiwan

With the above statistics being collected, it proves that Taiwan is truly a diverse country, involving several immigrants from other countries. Therefore, there should have been some migrant laws aimed at protecting the right of immigrants. The following paragraph is going to illustrate the international migration laws and the migration laws of Taiwan.

Based on the latest announcements of **New Immigrant Basic Law** from the Executive Yuan, which aims to comprehensively enhance rights protections for new immigrants. Interior Minister Liu Shyh-Fang announced the creation of the " Preparatory Office for the Protection of the Rights of New Immigrants," a dedicated body to champion the rights and welfare of new immigrants, ensuring comprehensive care and support for new immigrants.

According to Minister Liu, "the purpose of upgrading the immigrant laws is to provide for a dedicated government body to handle new immigrant affairs that will create a more friendly environment for foreigners." And through the implementation of "expanding the legal definition of new immigrants, signal to the world that Taiwan welcomes foreign professionals to bring their skills and capital, put down long-term roots, integrate into local

life, form a bond with Taiwan, and ultimately become naturalized citizens."[3]

1.5 Demographic dimensions of immigrants in Taiwan

1.5.1 Gender Ratio of Foreign Spouses

Although globally there are more male immigrants than female ones, UN DESA (2023) reported that women account for about 49% of all migrants. Interestingly, the case of Taiwan differs from this global pattern. Among the 570 thousand immigrants in Taiwan, according to the historical statistics from the Ministry of the Interior National Immigration Agency, 2023. 607,025 population belong to foreign spouses. With the division of gender, it is revealed that the majority of foreign spouses are female with a number of 187,705(86%) while only 29,616(14%) foreign spouses are male. It demonstrates a huge gap between female and male foreign spouses. Interestingly, the gender ratio in Taiwan is 97.1%, representing an equal division of male and female population.

The theory of "Marriage gradient" can be implemented to explain the above phenomenon. "Marriage Gradient Theory" created by a sociologist, Jessis Bernald, which illustrated a phenomenon that men tend to choose their spouse whose social class or income level is inferior while women hold the opposite perception. They typically marry someone whose social class is equal to or higher than their own. Also, it clarifies why the majority of foreign spouses are females that come from Southeast Asia, such as Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, and etc. This phenomenon aligned perfectly with Bernald's theory.

1.5.2 Challenges Immigrants Face in Adapting to Taiwanese Society

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[3] Ministry of the Interior (Taiwan). "立法院三讀通過新住民專法 內政部：持續精進新住民照顧服務措施.," Ministry of the Interior (Taiwan), updated July 17, 2024, 2024, https://www.moi.gov.tw/News_Content.aspx?n=4&s=318006.

Another main factor that results in inadaptation for immigrants in Taiwan is "discrimination." From the annual investigation report by the Ministry of the Interior National Immigration Agency, (2023), 14.2% of migrant employees and 51.1% of unemployed migrant workers were both in struggle of seeking the ideal job opportunities. The crucial reasons for the difficulties of seeking jobs they encountered are "low level of Chinese writing and literacy", "struggles in communication with Chinese" (language barrier) and "Discrimination in the workplace." This phenomenon is the so-called "social exclusion" which may potentially steer some social problems caused by immigrants since they have been receiving exclusion and discrimination. However, some scholars refer that

"New immigrants in Taiwan often encounter significant challenges in satisfying their daily needs and participating in community social activities. These difficulties primarily stem from a lack of support from informal social networks, such as their original families, as well as barriers related to language and cultural differences."[4]

Furthermore, within formal social systems, new immigrants frequently face discrimination and unequal treatment. Although, the experiences of discrimination among new immigrants often vary by social class, while lower-income or less-educated immigrants may face unequal treatment, those in advanced professional roles are generally less affected by such biases. But in this study, it is matched with the issues of social class, income, and education. In addition, due to deficiencies in existing legal frameworks, they often lack

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[4] Ministry of the Interior National Immigration Agency, "Summary of the 2023 Survey Report of New Immigrants' Living Needs.," (2024).
https://www.immigration.gov.tw/media/107732/2112%E5%B9%B4%E6%96%B0%E4%BD%8F%E6%B0%91%E7%94%9F%E6%B4%BB%E9%9C%80%E6%B1%82%E8%AA%BF%E6%9F%A5%E6%91%98%E8%A6%81%E5%A0%B1%E5%91%8A-%E8%8B%B1%E6%96%87%E7%89%88.pdf.

effective channels for seeking assistance, resulting in prolonged hardships and systemic disadvantages.

To address these issues, the establishment of a Basic Law for New Immigrants had been proposed. The Executive Yuan Council approved the draft of the "New Immigrants' Rights Protection Act," proposed by the Ministry of the Interior, on June 21st, 2024. This legal framework is expected to serve as a mechanism for the government to uphold the constitutional principle of equality. Additionally, it would facilitate the development of policies tailored to the diverse conditions, circumstances, and needs of various ethnic groups within the country.[5]

Motivation

Having witnessed the many challenges of my mother faced as a new immigrant in Taiwan, as well as the misunderstandings and criticism that new immigrants often encounter, I became deeply interested in exploring how social integration can be effectively achieved. I believe that when immigrants struggle to integrate into society, social tensions and related issues may arise. Promoting social integration is therefore essential—not only to enhance the resilience and well-being of new immigrants but also to foster Taiwan's cultural diversity and economic prosperity while also fostering Taiwan's cultural diversity, economic prosperity, and development as a humanistic society.

Research Purpose

This research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of government policies and programs designed to assist new immigrants in integrating into Taiwanese society. Specifically, it seeks

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[5] Lai-Sim Lam, "林麗蟬觀點：移民政策與專法迫在眉睫," 風傳媒, January 10, 2018 2018, https://www.storm.mg/article/383059.

to determine whether these initiatives effectively address the challenges of adaptation and the

difficulties that new immigrants experience in their daily lives. The study will focus on

immigrants who have chosen to reside in Taiwan permanently, rather than temporary migrant

workers, in order to gain deeper insight into long-term integration processes. This research

primarily seeks to

Research Questions

1.   What factors influence the social integration of new immigrants in Taiwan?

2.   What types of assistance do new immigrants most need to facilitate their social

integration? explore the process through which new immigrants adapt and transform from

residents into citizens.

3.   How can the government improve its existing programs and policies to better meet the

needs of new immigrants?

Contribution

By acknowledging and analyzing the needs of new immigrants, this research seeks to

identify the key factors that influence their pursuit of social integration in Taiwan. The

findings are expected to provide valuable insights into how governmental support programs

can be improved to better address immigrants' challenges. Ultimately this study seeks to

inform the development of inclusive policy frameworks that advance social cohesion and

intercultural understanding in the context of Taiwanese society.

Limits

One potential limitation of this research is the difficulty of recruiting participants from

four different Southeast Asian countries, as access to networks for inviting suitable

interviewees may be limited. Additionally, it may be challenging to find participants who meet the requirement of having at least ten years of living experience in Taiwan. These constraints could affect the representativeness of the sample and may limit the generalizability of the findings.

Delimits

This study is delimited to new immigrants who have chosen to reside in Taiwan permanently and have lived in the country for at least ten years. Temporary migrant workers are excluded, as their experiences and integration processes differ significantly from those of long-term residents. In addition, immigrants from Western countries and China are not included in the study. While immigrants from China constitute a large portion of Taiwan's new immigrant population, they share a common language and similar cultural background with local Taiwanese, which generally reduces integration barriers compared to those faced by immigrants from Southeast Asia. Therefore, this study concentrates specifically on immigrants from Southeast Asian countries to deliver a better understanding about the unique integration experiences of this target group.

LITERATURE REVEW

Since, the primary challenge many new immigrants face is adjusting to a new society, particularly when it comes to employment difficulties, cultural adaptation, language barriers, mental health, and legal issues. This research will focus on Southeast Asian migrations to Taiwan, and will examine the key findings from scholars on this topic.

2.1 Social recognition:

Social recognition is the appreciation that people give each other. This recognition is exchanged within nearly all of our social interactions, Social recognition is the appreciation an observer holds for the person he observes.[6] According to Pettigrew, social psychology is shaped by a group of people and the discrimination can be changed through structural change. So, this appreciation may be directed towards that person as a whole, or towards particular components of that person, such as particular skills. In addition, social recognition is a three-part normative phenomenon, since one can receive positive, neutral, or negative recognition.[7]. Although, Taiwan has emphasized in education that all people are equal, but the author also indicated that social integration may depend on these micro-social interaction processes, such as judgments without conscious intention.

2.1.1 Social support system

The concept of social support is multidimensional and can be incorporated into a larger context termed social capital, where social support and social networks are parts.[8] Besides,

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[6] Pettigrew 1967, "Social Evaluation Theory: Convergences and Applications," in *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation*, ed. Irwin Katz (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press: 1967).

[7] Bargh and Chartrand, "The Unbearable Automaticity of Being," *American Psychologist* 54, no. 7 (1999); Chartrand, "The Unbearable Automaticity of Being."

[8] Mikael Rostila, "The Facets of Social Capital," *Journal of Theory and Social Behaviour* 41, no. 3 (**2011**).

this author concluded two social capital facets: 1) from individual network, and 2) from a group of community. For new immigrants that need to establish a good supportive resources and social capital, have to take this approach into consideration.

Social support and social networks are described in different ways; mainly these can be presented as (1) structurally and functionally and (2) formally and informally.[9]

Social support is a positive behavior if an individual is under stress or need assistance. He or she can gain assistance and support from others in time and feel satisfied with these social supports. Social support can not only boost personal adaptation and development but also lessen the stress when facing negative impact by the environment.[10] It takes a long time for new immigrants fitting into a new environment which is hugely different from their countries of origin. When they are on their way of integrating into the new society, they may encounter some problems such as language barrier, cultural difference, lack of legal status, inadaptation to social norms and etc. With Social support systems get involved in the lives of new immigrants, it functions as a bridge to connect his or her culture with the culture in host country.

Significant life transitions are often associated with uncertainty, requiring people to adjust and reorient themselves in the new environment, which can negatively influence people's well-being.[11] A large amount of research has suggested that relational resources for

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[9] R.; Bert N. Uchino; Rebecca Trettevik; Sara Cronan; Jessica Hogan Kent de Grey, "Oxford Bibliographies in Psychology," ed. Dana S. Dunn (series editor) (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

[10] Ya-Fen) 王雅芬 (Wang, "《臺北市外籍配偶社會支持之相關研究》" (社會教育所在職進修班 Graduate Institute of Social Education 學位論文 Master's Thesis, 臺北師範大學 National Taipei Teachers College, 2004); 王雅芬 (Wang, "《臺北市外籍配偶社會支持之相關研究》."

[11] Carleton et al., "Increasingly Certain about Uncertainty"; Iyer et al., "The More (and the More Compatible) the Merrier"; Jones, Fernyhough, and Meaden, "Appraisals of Auditory Hallucinations."

example—positive social interaction with natives, social support, participation, and sense of community—are key variables for predicting life satisfaction and creating appropriate conditions for health promotion in the immigrant population[12].

To alleviate their adaptation and immigration stress and concerns, the existence of social support system is irreplaceable and essential for new immigrants. Studies have shown the importance of social networks and social support for coping with acculturation difficulties and other issues.[13]

An example of social support system from the literature of The Relationship between Wellbeing, Self-Determination, and Resettlement Stress for Asylum-Seeking Mothers Attending an Ecosocial Community-Based Intervention: A Mixed-Methods Study explained that attending Welcome Haven is associated with reduced adaptive stress and increased wellbeing, which correspond with the thematic analysis showing that attendance at the workshops fostered a sense of belonging through connection with other asylum seekers and service providers as well as empowerment through access to information and self-expression.

Research with immigrants has clearly shown the importance of social support in the process of adapting to a new environment. In a study conducted with Vietnamese immigrant women in the United States, Die and Seelbach (1988) described the high level of emotional support given by the family, the fluidity of relationships within the group itself, and the role of the church as an institution which serves as a link with their original culture. Similarly, some immigrants have been seen to develop closer relationships with friends as a personal adaptation strategy.[14]

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[12] Cooper, Okamura, and Gurka, "Social Activity and Subjective Well-Being"; Foroughi, Misajon, and Cummins, "Relationships Between Migration"; Malone and Dooley, "'Dwelling in Displacement.'"

[13] (Martínez, Ramírez, and Jariego 2002; Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. 2006; Negi et al. 2013; Fernández et al. 2015)

[14] Wen-Huei Kuo and Ya-Mei Tsai, "Social Networking, Hardiness and Immigrant's Mental Health," Journal of

The overall operation of social support system can not only reduce the stress of being a newcomer for new immigrants but also provide them a sense of community in order to make them identify that they are part of this society.

2.1.2 Social identity

From the Social Identity Theory that moves the issues of immigrants to next level, it highlighted that people develop a social identity based on their membership in a group.[15.] Being affiliated with particular social groups reflects an individual's social status and position in the broader social hierarchy that they have the capacity to provide people with access to key social and psychological resources, including trust and social support, self-esteem and the sense of meaning, purpose and control in life, in the face of difficulties.[16]

Applying social identity theory, (a) people are motivated to maintain a positive self-concept; (b) the self-concept derives largely from group identification; and (c) people establish positive social identities by favorably comparing their in-group against an out-group. Having a social identity "satisfies the individuals' simultaneous needs for inclusion and differentiation.[17] It suggests that a person's social identity relates to any group that a person identifies as a psychologically meaningful description of the self, going beyond mere socio-demographic groups, such as race, gender, ethnicity or sexual identity. Nonetheless, studies indicate that maintaining identification with one's ethnicity post-migration is associated with

Health and Social Behavior 27, no. 2 (1986): 133–149; F. Franks and Shirley A. Faux, "Depression, Stress, Mastery, and Social Resources in Four Ethnocultural Women's Groups," Research in Nursing & Health 13, no. 5 (1990): 282–292.

[15] Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner, "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict," in *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, ed. W. G. Austin and S. Worchel (Monterey, California: Brooks/Cole, 1979).

[16] S. Alexander Haslam Tegan Cruwys, Genevieve A. Dingle, Catherine Haslam, and Jolanda Jetten, "Depression and Social Identity: An Integrative Review " *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 18, no. 3 (2014).

[17] Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior," in *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, ed. S. Worchel and W. G. Austin (Chicago: Hall Publishers, 1986).

reduced depressive and anxiety symptoms [18] and decreased psychological distress [19]. Additionally, increased ethnic identification has been shown to foster resilience against the negative effects of discrimination.[20]

Another theory called Self-Categorization Theory, which further emphasizes that different identities can become salient in different situations. In other words, immigrants' host-national identification to be relatively stable over time, whereas origin-national and religious identification underwent more changes. In other words, identity incompatibility could happen when the perception that various identities (origin-national, host-national, religious) are incompatible or conflicting. However, in group-specific ways, this suggests immigrants' strategies to (re-)define their origin and religious identification may differ from strategies driving identification with their host country. Immigrants who perceive their identities to be incompatible do not necessarily reject the host-national identity, but might turn to the higher-status group to sustain a positive and distinct social identity.[21]

From the literature of social identity, mental health and the experience of migration, it revealed that social identities, which provide purpose and a sense of belonging, enhance resilience against psychological strain and safeguard well-being. This applies to first-generation migrant populations facing adverse experiences, including prejudice and disconnection from previous identities during host country integration, negatively impacting

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[18] Elif Çelebi, Maykel Verkuyten, and Sabahat C. Bagci, "Ethnic Identification, Discrimination, and Mental and Physical Health among Syrian Refugees: The Moderating Role of Identity Needs," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 47, no. 7 (2017).

[19] Turro Wongkaren Krysia N. Mossakowski, Terrence D. Hill, and Robert Johnson, "Does Ethnic Identity Buffer or Intensify the Stress of Discrimination among the Foreign Born and U.S. Born? Evidence from the Miami-Dade Health Survey"," *Journal of Community Psychology* 47, no. 3 (2019).

[20] Felipe E. García et al., "Sense of Ethnic Belonging: Relation With Well-Being and Psychological Distress in Inhabitants of the Mapuche Conflict Area, Chile," *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (2021/1/11 2021), https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.617465, http://dx.doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.617465.

[21] Isabelle Suchowitz and Fenella Fleischmann, "National identity development among recent immigrants: The role of perceived incompatibility," *Journal of Social and Political Psychology* 11, no. 1 (2023).

their well-being. Thus, the consistency of the identity will foster a better mental health for people, especially the immigrants. Some factors are found to explain how immigrants adapt to the change and difference between their countries of origin and the country they live currently, including their access to pre-existing social connections from their former place of residence, the compatibility of these connections with those established in the relocated area and the extent to which both networks can provide support in the new social and environmental context.

Despite the fact that social identity theory suggesting that a person's social identity relates to any group that a person identifies as a psychologically meaningful description of the self, going beyond mere socio-demographic groups, such as race, gender, ethnicity or sexual identity. Nonetheless, studies indicate that maintaining identification with one's ethnicity post-migration is associated with reduced depressive and anxiety symptom and decreased psychological distress.[22] Additionally, increased ethnic identification has been shown to foster resilience against the negative effects of discrimination.[23]

Social identity of new immigrants is consistent with their psychological well-being. It hardly changes their social identity to host country. From the above arguments, it is beneficial for immigrants to maintain the identity of their countries of origin. Transforming identity from countries of origin to host country may cause mental harm or identical stress to immigrants. Therefore, social integration of new immigrants can offer a sense of belonging and community, sense of community encourages the adjustment to a new country and strengthens the immigrant's quality of life and social integration.[24] It aims to lessen their stress and worries of

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[22] Krysia N. Mossakowski, "Does Ethnic Identity Buffer or Intensify the Stress of Discrimination among the Foreign Born and U.S. Born? Evidence from the Miami-Dade Health Survey"."

[23] G. L. Stein M. A. Thibeault, R. O. Nelson-Gray, "Ethnic Identity in Context of Ethnic Discrimination: When Does Gender and Other-Group Orientation Increase Risk for Depressive Symptoms for Immigrant-Origin Young Adults?," *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology* 24, no. 2 (2018).

[24] A. R. Fischer, C. C. Sonn, B. J. Bishop, "Sense of Community, Community Participation, and Social Support in a Multicultural Society," *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology / Journal of Community Psychology* 12 / 41, no. 6 / 2 (2002 / 2013).

entering a new environment, and guarantee an inclusive and open-hearted sphere for them. That is called "bicultural identity" as well as "dual identity."

2.1.3 Social integration

Social Integration is a terminology which covers different perceptions by various scholars. For instance, according to UNHCR (2014)[25], Social integration is one of the four dimensions (the other three being legal, economic and cultural) of wider integration.

In Emile Durkheim's work, social integration is associated with social cohesion. He makes clear that integration has to do with the bonds of the individual to society - and its individual formations, such as the family, religious and political groups and organizations.[26]

Also, Rodier (2016) emphasizes social integration is the process of forming social consensus which is based on a common system of values, meanings, culture and language.[27]

Still, achieving social integration is facilitated by developing linguistic and cultural knowledge of the host society, as well as ensuring a sense of security and stability. Finally, the acquisition of citizenship functions decisively in promoting social integration.[28]

Moreover, Social integration is understood as inclusion of individual migrants into the core institutions of the receiving society, with structural, cultural, interactive and identificative integration as dimensions of that process.[29]

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[25] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Global Trends* (2014), https://www.unhcr.org/media/unhcr-global-trends-2014.

[26] Berkman, "From Social Integration to Health: Durkheim in the New Millennium.."

[27] Vasilis Eleftheriou, Charalampos Kyriakidis, and Potsiou Chryssy, "Identifying the factors affecting social integration in local societies: A literature review," *European Journal of Social Sciences* 6 (12/31 2023).

[28] Nikos Kourachanis, *Citizenship and Social Policy-From Post-War Development to Permanent Crisis*, 1 ed. (Palgrave Macmillan Cham, 2020).

[29] Friedrich Heckmann, *Integration and Integration Policies: IMISCOE Network Feasibility Study*, Europäisches Forum für Migrationsstudien (Bamberg, 2005).

However, some scholars hold contradictory perceptions toward social integration; they emphasize that social integration is an exclusive concept that ignores the distinctiveness and diversification of culture from immigrants.

Perceptions against integration

Adrian Favell critically challenges the conventional discourse of immigrant "integration" in Europe. He argues that supposedly self-contained European nation-states often coerce foreigners to conform to the prototypical image of a "moral, acculturated, and patriotic" citizen in the name of a fictitious national unity. This, according to Favell, represents a political denial of globalization's impact on the nineteenth-century conception of the bounded nation-state society. Also, Olwig and Paerregard Integration (2011) is not a neutral concept denoting the joining together of different population groups. Rather, it is "ideologically loaded,"[30]

    To achieve the success of social integration, the enactment of immigration policies is needed to enhance life satisfaction and the equity of legal systems for new immigrants as newcomers. However, this research will apply the theory of social integration, focusing on Asian cases that are most relevant to this frame work.

2.2 Immigrant policy

    Immigrant policy refers to policies aimed at facilitating the social and economic integration of immigrants.[31] In other words, Immigrant policies are related to social welfare,

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[30] Karen Fog Olwig and Karsten Pærregaard, *The Question of Integration: Immigration, Exclusion and the Danish Welfare State* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011).

[31] Michael Fix and Jeffrey S. Passel, *Immigration and Immigrants: Setting the Record Straight* (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 1994).

health, education, and housing and employment programs. From the stance of immigrants, immigrant policy plays an important role in shaping their lives in host countries; moreover, immigrant policy is one of the vital elements of prompting social integration of immigrants.

Realizing human rights in migration policy also means incorporating certain cross-cutting human rights principles, including Equality and non-discrimination, Participation and inclusion and Accountability and rule of law.[32]

2.2.1 International immigrant policy

Since the number of immigration reached 258 million in 2017, an increase of 85 million (49%), compared to 2000. It represents a growing trend of immigration; therefore, more and more governments have released policies to advocate for the integration of migrants.

Integration policies are essential to achieve inclusive and sustainable economic growth in countries of destination and contribute to the well-being of migrants. Globally, 59 percent of Governments have introduced a policy or program aimed at integrating non-nationals into their society. The share of Governments with at least one policy measure to promote the integration of immigrants ranges from a low of 40 per cent in Africa to a high of 100 per cent in Northern America.[33]

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[32] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), *Migration and Human Rights: Improving Human Rights-Based Governance of International Migration*, OHCHR (Geneva, 2013), https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Migration/MigrationHR_improvingHR_Report.pdf.

[33] Department of Economic and Social Affairs United Nations, Population Division, *International Migration Policies: Data Booklet (ST/ESA/SER.A/395)* (New York: United Nations, 2017).
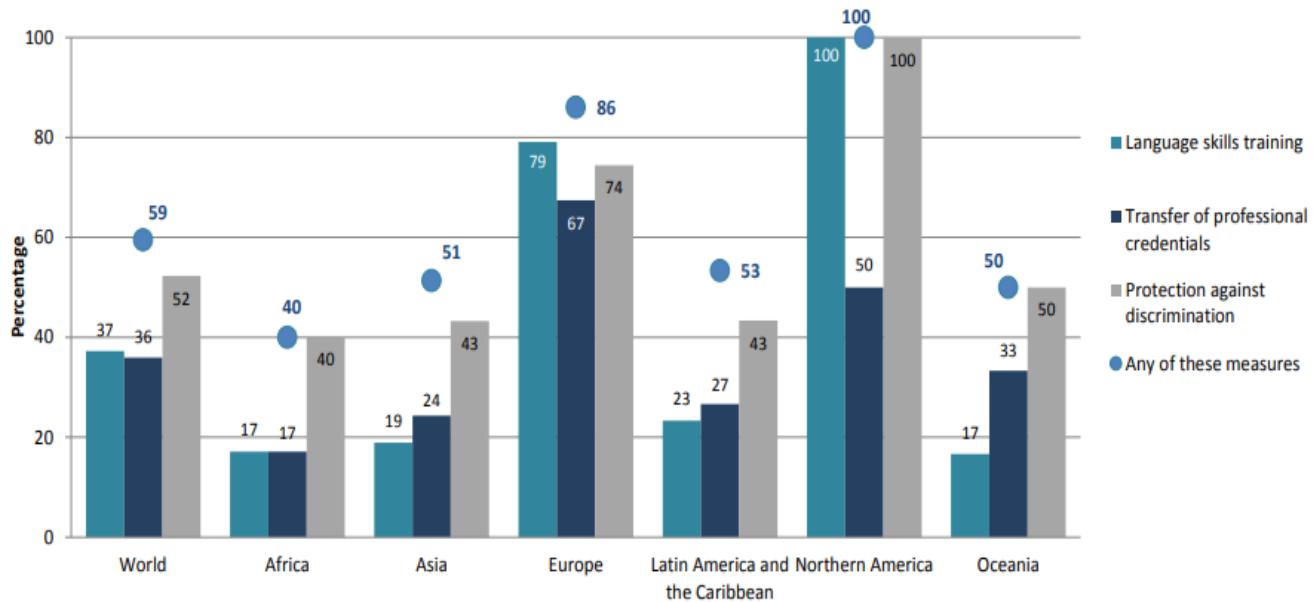
Data source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2016).
Note: Based on 153 countries with available data.

Figure 2. Percentage of Governments with a policy to promote the integration of immigrants by type of policy measure and region, 2015

2.2.2 Taiwanese Immigrant Policy

Immigration Patterns of Taiwanese Society

Immigrant policy in Taiwan. Based on the latest announcements of New immigrant basic law from the Executive Yuan, which aims to comprehensively enhance rights protections for new immigrants. "The purpose of upgrading the immigrant laws is to provide for a dedicated government body to handle new immigrant affairs that will create a more friendly environment for foreigners, and through expanding the legal definition of new immigrants, signal to the world that Taiwan welcomes foreign professionals to bring their skills and capital, put down long-term roots, integrate into local life, form a bond with Taiwan, and ultimately become naturalized citizens."

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There are five domains of the New immigrant basic law. First, Expanded legal definition of new immigrants. "In addition to foreign spouses, the definition will be widened to include residents in Taiwan for professional, technical and investment reasons; Mainland Area citizens residing in Taiwan for economic, technological and cultural considerations; and people from Hong Kong and Macau residing in Taiwan for reasons of employment, investment or as a family dependent. The rights protections will be extended to the children of new immigrants." Since the magnitude of new immigrants has been expanded to include not only marriage immigrants, but also professional immigrants and skilled immigrants, along with their children.[34]

Second, a Dedicated government body for new immigrant affairs. "The new body will be a third-level government agency, and will be responsible for coordinating and promoting matters related to new immigrants' education, employment and empowerment, in addition to a range of other bespoke services."

Third, Quinquennial reviews. "The government will conduct a review and formulate a revised plan once every five years, and publish the results of the review, in order to ensure that the support measures are meeting the needs of new immigrants."

Fourth, New immigrant development fund. "The fund aims to provide new immigrants and their families with care and counseling services; human resources training and development; and a barrier-free language environment, as well as facilitate the creation of a multicultural society."

Fifth, Measures to protect the rights and interests of new immigrants. "Advance eight major care service measures, including life adaptation, reproductive health, employment

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[34] Ministry of the Interior National Immigration Agency, "Care and Counseling for New Immigrants," Immigration Counseling Section, updated August 6, 2024, 2024, accessed May 22, 2025, https://www.immigration.gov.tw/5475/5478/141386/141401/234741/.

protection, and personal safety, to ensure the rights and interests of new immigrants and their children."

2.3 Cultural Contexts of Immigrants

2.3.1 Immigrants as Social Capital comprised of Bridging and Bonding effect

When people migrate to a new country, they bring resources, habits, and experiences from their home country, including valuable productive inputs (e.g., labor, skills, other sources of human capital) that can generate substantial economic returns for the host country.[35].

Since immigrants are employed in the host country, as a source of social capital. The effect of bonding and bridging social capital influencing the likelihood of immigrants being employed. Possessing bridging social capital implies having access to unique information by connecting to other networks. These bridges create opportunities for upward mobility on the labour market.[36] finds that having interethnic friends is positively correlated to hourly earnings and participation on the labour market

For bonding social capital, the effects are less clear-cut. Bonding social capital is conceptualized as the family network and co-ethnic friendships. A strong family network may provide good opportunities for building ethnic networks since it, too, is an ethnic network. It is likely that people with a strong family network can more easily access wider ethnic networks and the potential benefits of the ethnic economy through insider referrals.[37]

[35] Amelie F. Constant and Klaus F. Zimmermann, ed., *International Handbook on the Economics of Migration* (Cheltenham, UK / Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013).

[36] Seymour Sudman, "Experiments in measuring neighbor and relative social networks," *Social Networks* 10, no. 1 (1988/03/01/ 1988), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-8733(88)90012-3, https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/0378873388900123.

[37] Bram Lancee, "Immigrant Performance in the Labour Market: Bonding and Bridging Social Capital," *Ethnic*

Moreover, bonding social capital has two sides is also illustrated by Heath and Yu (2005). According to them, ethnic minorities lack bridging social capital due to isolation and consequently lack access to employment opportunities. On the other hand, they add, geographically concentrated ethnic minorities may develop high levels of bonding capital, which can provide a basis for a successful local economy. Although bridging ties create opportunities, high closure in one's network does not because the same information is being circulated within the network, but due to the closure they improve their position on the labour market. This is the argument rooted in the statement that whereas bonding is to 'get by', bridging is to 'get ahead.'[38]

2.3.2 Cultural adaptation

Every immigrant also enters this new society with (potentially) different cultural backgrounds, marked by distinct languages, religions, and (economic and social) values. Unfortunately, cultural exchanges triggered by migration flows sometimes are associated with dissimilation and segregation, which exert detrimental (social and economic) effects on both natives and immigrants. Social scientists recently started to recognize the economic value of harmonious cultural diversity[39] and the importance of cultural, linguistic, and ethnic homogeneity in determining people's openness to immigrants.

As economic literature suggests, money is not enough to make people happy; in addition to economic factors, non-economic dimension, such as adaptation, play a crucial role in determining subjective well-being. Adaptation can be categorized into psychological and

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and Racial Studies 35, no. 4 (2012).

[38] Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

[39] Giorgio I. P. Ottaviano and Giovanni Peri, "The Economic Value of Cultural Diversity: Evidence from US Cities," *Journal of Economic Geography* 6, no. 1 (2006).

sociocultural domains.[40] Psychological adaptation in this case refers to an individual's satisfaction and overall emotional or psychological health. Studies interested in psychological adaptation have primarily focused on mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. While comparing with Sociocultural adaptation, it refers to how successfully the individual acquires the corresponding sociocultural skills for living effectively in the new sociocultural atmosphere. The sociocultural adaptation has been operationalized in several ways, including behavior problems, school achievement, and social competence. These two models of adaptation are interrelated; both address problems and bridge positive interactions with members of the host culture that are likely to improve the overall well-being and satisfaction of newcomers.

Various perspectives on the social dimensions affecting new immigrants are examined in the literature review, including social recognition, social identity, social integration, support systems, and immigration policies. Accordingly, the methodological approach of this study seeks to determine which of these dimensions serves as the primary determinant influencing the social integration of new immigrants in Taiwan.

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[40] Colleen Ward, ""The Impact of International Students' Experiences on Their Sociocultural and Psychological Adaptation"," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 25, no. 6 (2001).

METHODOLOGY

Research Process

The study is going to operate Narrative Inquiry to dig into the experiences and perceptions of new immigrants who migrated from Southeast Asia to Taiwan. The methodology of narrative inquiry, which explores stories, narratives of experience, as the phenomenon of interest, narrative inquirers "embrace a relational understanding of the roles and interactions of the researcher and the researched."[41]

Secondly, data will be collected through a combination of in-depth interviews and structured quantitative questionnaires.

Research Design

This study applies a qualitative research method, complemented by quantitative data collection. The qualitative component consists of in-depth interviews with four Southeast Asian immigrants residing in Taiwan. According to statistics from the Ministry of the Interior, the majority of new immigrants in Taiwan originate from China and Southeast Asia. However, this research specifically focuses on Southeast Asian immigrants, as immigrants from China generally share similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds with the Taiwan, making their integration comparatively less challenging. The in-depth interviews aim to explore participants' motivations for migration, processes of social integration, and the challenges and needs encountered in their integration to Taiwanese society.

In addition to qualitative inquiry, a quantitative method was incorporated through the use of questionnaires, designed to capture the integration experiences of short-term immigrants in Taiwan such as exchange students and foreign workers. By comparing the

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[41] Ben Okri, *The Politics of Educational Change: International Perspectives* (London: RoutledgeFalmer, 2003).

experiences and dynamics between new immigrants and short-term immigrants, this study seeks to generate a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing immigrants' integration into Taiwanese society.

Table 2. Interviewee Demographic Information

Code	Gender	Marriage	Nationalities	Year of Arrival	ID Card
VIET	F	Y	Vietnam	2006	Y
INDO	F	Y	Indonesia	2000	Y
THAI	F	N	Thailand	1997	N
PHIL	F	Y	Philippine	2005	Y

Sources of Data

Given that the largest proportion of new immigrants to Taiwan—excluding those from China—originates from Southeast Asia, this study identifies Southeast Asian immigrants as its primary research population. This research specifically focuses on Southeast Asian new immigrants because, unlike immigrants from China who share similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds with Taiwanese society, Southeast Asian immigrants experience more pronounced differences in culture, language, and value systems. These distinctions create unique challenges in their adaptation process, shaping different patterns of social integration.

In addition, the qualitative component of this study includes four female participants aged between 25 and 50, each of whom has resided in Taiwan for over ten years. Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure that they had substantial migration and settlement experience in Taiwan. The sample represents diverse national backgrounds, including Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

All interviewees are female, a decision derived from statistical data from the Ministry of

the Interior indicating that the majority of immigrants to Taiwan are women, most of whom are foreign spouses. Consequently, nationality, gender, and years of residence were established as fixed sampling criteria for this study.

For the quantitative component, a total of 27 valid questionnaire responses were collected, excluding the four questionnaires completed by the interview participants. Among these respondents, 19 were from Indonesia, six from Vietnam, one from Thailand, and one from the Philippines.

Inclusion criteria for interview participants were as follows:

1. Participants must come from Southeast Asian countries

2. Participants must have lived in Taiwan for 10 years

3. Participants must be females

4. Participants must be willing to share their experiences openly in a one-on-one interview setting.

Participants who do not have 10 years of living experience and the gender is males will be determined as exclusion criteria in the research.

Data Collection

The Data Collection Plan of the study will conduct semi-structured 4 in-depth interviews, which not only maintain a room for flexibility but also ensure insights throughout the interview, with immigrants from Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia and Philippine in a cafe. The data collection process is estimated to be accomplished before August. The post-interview period will be utilized to prepare complete, detailed and valid interview questions. Before starting interviewing the participants, participants will be asked to sign consent forms and be informed that their data will be anonymized to ensure confidentiality and privacy. The interview questions are designed to dig into participant's personal stories and perceptions after transitioning from Southeast countries to Taiwan.

Example questions included:

- "Why did you choose Taiwan as your target country to migrate to?   What purposes or criterias did you take into consideration when making the decision of migration?"

- "Have you ever found difficulties to maintain the life here such as hardship in finding jobs or language barriers? If yes, could you illustrate more?"

- "Have you ever tried to integrate into Taiwanese society? If yes, have you experienced any inadaptation (either in physical or psychological aspect): If no, why do you choose to refuse integration?"

Interviews will be audio-recorded, with informed consent from the participants. Also, transcriptions will be written verbatim to ensure the integrity of participants' responses.

<h3 style="text-align:center">Process of Data Analysis</h3>

The Data analysis will adopt thematic analysis on interview scripts, thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail.[42] The analysis followed a six-stage process:

1. **Familiarization**: All interview transcripts will be read carefully to ensure a comprehensive understanding and deep interpretation.

2. **Generating Initial Codes**: The researcher uses the data to conduct initial codes by keywords, key phrases, and ideas related to research questions.

3. **Searching for Themes**: codes will be categorized into themes

4. **Reviewing Themes**: The researcher reviews and refines themes to ensure they are consistent with the essence of the data.

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[42] Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Using thematic analysis in psychology," *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2006/01/01 2006), https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa, https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa.

5. **Defining and Naming Themes**: Each theme is defined and established by its relevance to the research questions.

6. **Writing the report**: The findings will be written in a structured format, corresponding with direct quotes from participants to illustrate themes.

Table 3. Themes and Subcodes

Theme	Sub-codes
Motivation	Political and civil-liberties of Taiwan
	Determination of retaining Taiwan
Social Recognition	Stereotypes
	Discrimination
Social Networks and Community Support	Family and Peer Networks
	Social Networks Assistance-hometown associations
	Vocational Institutions
Social Integration	Length of Adapting Taiwanese Society
	Sense of Belonging and Identity
	Development of bridging social capital
	Cultural Participation & Engagement
Immigrant Policy and Government Support	Skill and Language Training
	Financial Subsidies
	Relaxed Naturalization Requirements for Skilled Migrants

DATA ANALYSIS

According to the data that I collected from in-depth interviews conducted with four participants, who are individually coming from different countries, including Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand and Philippine. The analysis will be separated into six categories to illustrate new immigrants' life situation in different dimensions. The data will be implemented to analyze the main factor that substantially hinders the social integration of new immigrants in Taiwan. In addition, the quantitative data collected from questionnaires will serve as a numerical evidence aiming to consolidate the research findings.

I. Motivation

a. Political and civil-liberties of Taiwan

From the in-depth interview, it is revealed that despite differences in personal background, all participants share a common aspiration for a better life and brighter future in Taiwan.

1. Positive Impression of Taiwan

Interviewee VIET reported that her perception of Taiwan as a friendly and safe country played a major role in her migration decision at the first beginning. When Interviewee VIET was considering the decision of migrating to Taiwan, she was being told that Taiwanese is friendly, which makes her feel confident that migrating to Taiwan is safer and easier.

2. Geographical Priority

Geographical neighboring emerged as a significant factor influencing Interviewee VIET's decision to migrate to Taiwan. The relatively short distance between Vietnam and Taiwan enabled her to visit her family more frequently, thereby reducing her emotional and psychological stress, as it allowed her to return to her country of origin more frequently and at relatively low cost. Moreover, Taiwan's geographical advantage—its close location to

Southeast Asia—serves as an additional pull factor for any new immigrants from the region, who view Taiwan as a convenient and accessible destination for migration.

3. Economic Opportunities

Interviewees INDO and PHIL identified economic motives as their main driving force. Both perceived Taiwan as a more economically advanced society compared to their home countries. For instance, Interviewee PHIL noted that

> *"In Philippine, the earning per day is approximately*
> *300NT dollars while the earning in Taiwan per day can be*
> *1000 NT dollars above."[43]*

Interviewees INDO and PHIL originate from Southeast Asian countries where average income levels are considerably lower than those in Taiwan. Owing to the significant economic disparity between Taiwan and their countries of origin, both participants identified economic opportunity as a primary motivation for migration, viewing Taiwan's more advanced economic development as a pathway to improved living standards.

4. Passive Drive to Taiwan

In contrast to the other participants who hold positive motivation of migration, Interviewee THAI migrated to Taiwan as a result of marriage. She was the only participant whose decision to relocate was driven by external circumstances—specifically, her husband's desire to return to Taiwan—rather than by her own plans or expectations. Consequently, entering Taiwan without clear expectations or personal aspirations initially led her to experience a sense of regret when compared with other interviewees. Nevertheless, over time, certain factors prompted Interviewee THAI to develop a sense of recognition and attachment toward Taiwan, ultimately influencing her decision to remain in the country.

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[43] Interview PHIL.

Table 4. Factors Influencing Migration to Taiwan

	Interviewee VIET	Interviewee THAI	Interviewee INDO	Interviewee PHIL
Positive Impression of Taiwan	✓			
Geographical Priority	✓			
Economic Opportunities			✓	✓

Questionnaire Results

According to *Figure 3*., which presents data collected from 27 respondents, the majority (96.3%) indicated that their primary reason for coming to Taiwan was to pursue education. In contrast, 11.1% of respondents reported migrating for employment opportunities, while 7.4% identified family reunification as their main reason for relocation.

Reasons of Coming to Taiwan

	Family Renification	Study	Work	Marriage	Other
Percentage	7.40%	96.30%	11.10%	0%	3.70%
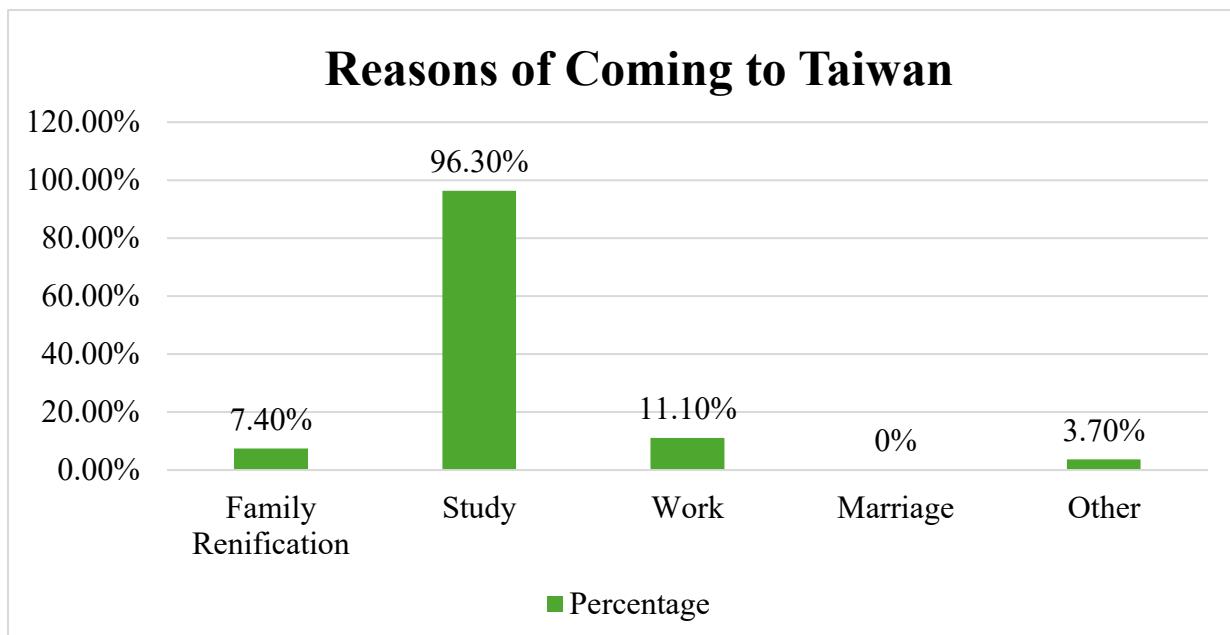
Figure 3. The result of reason for Coming to Taiwan in questionnaires
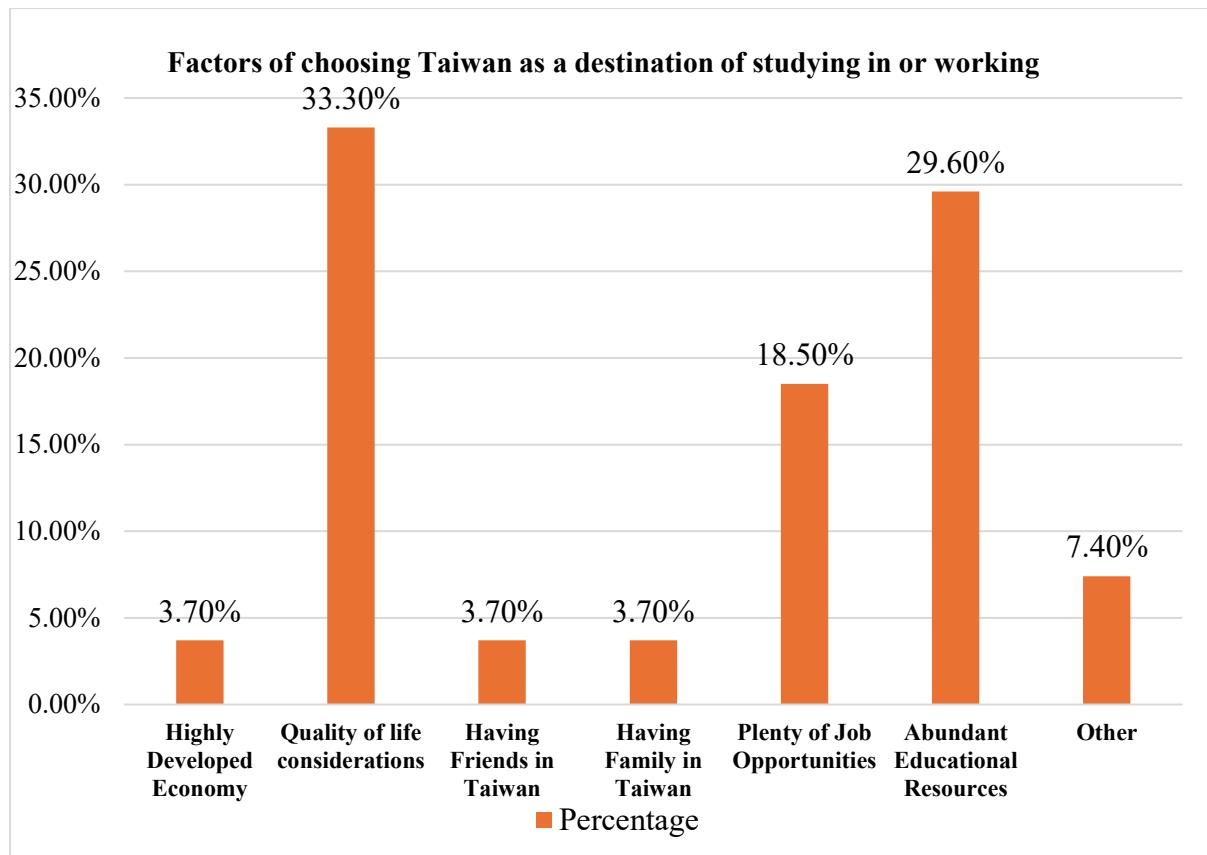
Figure 4. Factors of choosing Taiwan as destination of studying in or working

Based on *Figure 4*., participants reported a range of factors contributing to their satisfaction with life in Taiwan. The most frequently cited reason was the pursuit of a higher quality of life, mentioned by 33.3% of respondents, suggesting that favorable living conditions play a crucial role in enhancing their overall well-being. Additionally, 29.6% of respondents highlighted access to abundant educational resources as their primary motivation, reflecting Taiwan's appeal as a preferred study destination. Furthermore, 18.5% of respondents indicated that the availability of employment opportunities was a key factor influencing their satisfaction.

In summary, most participants were motivated by the perceived friendliness, economic prosperity, and geographical proximity of Taiwan, whereas only one displayed a passive migration motivation. The quantitative data further reveal that most participants choose

Taiwan to live or study in with the intention of attaining more convenient living conditions, access to abundant educational resources, and ample employment opportunities. These results suggest that, whether viewed from the perspective of new immigrants or individuals coming to Taiwan for specific purposes, the primary considerations are quality of life and job opportunities. Despite varying purposes and degrees of willingness to migrate, all interviewees have resided in Taiwan for more than a decade. Their long-term retention in Taiwan appears to be influenced by multiple interrelated factors, including family bonds, employment opportunities, and lifestyle or quality-of-life considerations.

b. Determination of retaining Taiwan

1. Family Bonds

Interviewee VIET, admitted that she had once considered returning to her country of origin. However, since marrying a Taiwanese husband and having a child, she now regards her family as both a source of support and a responsibility that motivates her to remain in Taiwan.

2. Employment opportunities

Interviewees VIET and PHIL emphasized that maintaining economic well-being is a key factor influencing their decision to continue residing in Taiwan. They explained that the stable income opportunities available in Taiwan enable them not only to save money but also to remit funds to their families in their countries of origin, thereby providing financial support. Both participants noted that achieving a comparable level of financial satisfaction is considerably more difficult in most Southeast Asian countries, a view shared by all interviewees in this study.

3. Lifestyle / Quality of life considerations

Interviewees THAI and INDO reported similar motivations for remaining in Taiwan.

Both expressed satisfaction with and adaptation to the high quality of life that Taiwan offers, particularly in terms of medical services and comprehensive transportation systems. In addition, interviewee THAI identified her children as a major factor influencing her decision to stay. She emphasized that Taiwan provides abundant educational resources, which she believes will be beneficial for her children's future development.

The result pointing to factors that economic well-being and life convenience are the key motivations for their long-term retention. Although Taiwan is such a good place for them to stay and develop; Besides these good aspects, it is also crucial to discuss whether they have felt integrated with the whole Taiwanese society. Therefore, some issues such as social recognition, support systems, and social integration ought to be taken into account.

Table 5. Factors Influencing Retention in Taiwan

	Interviewee VIET	Interviewee THAI	Interviewee INDO	Interviewee PHIL
Family Bonds	✓			
Employment opportunities	✓			✓
Lifestyle / Quality of life considerations		✓	✓	

Questionnaire Result

來台灣後，我喜歡這裡的生活環境 After coming to Taiwan, I enjoy the living environment here.
27 則回應

● 非常同意 Strongly Agree
● 同意 Agree
● 普通 Neutral
● 不同意 Disagree
● 非常不同意 Strongly disagree

Mean:5

Mode:4.45

Figure 5. After coming to Taiwan, I enjoy the living environment here.

According to *Figure 5*., 48.1% of respondents strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the living conditions in Taiwan, while 40.7% agreed with the statement. In contrast, 11.1% of respondents remained neutral regarding their satisfaction levels. Overall, the results indicate that short-term immigrants in Taiwan generally hold a positive perception of their living environment. The specific factors contributing to their satisfaction are illustrated in *Figure 6*.
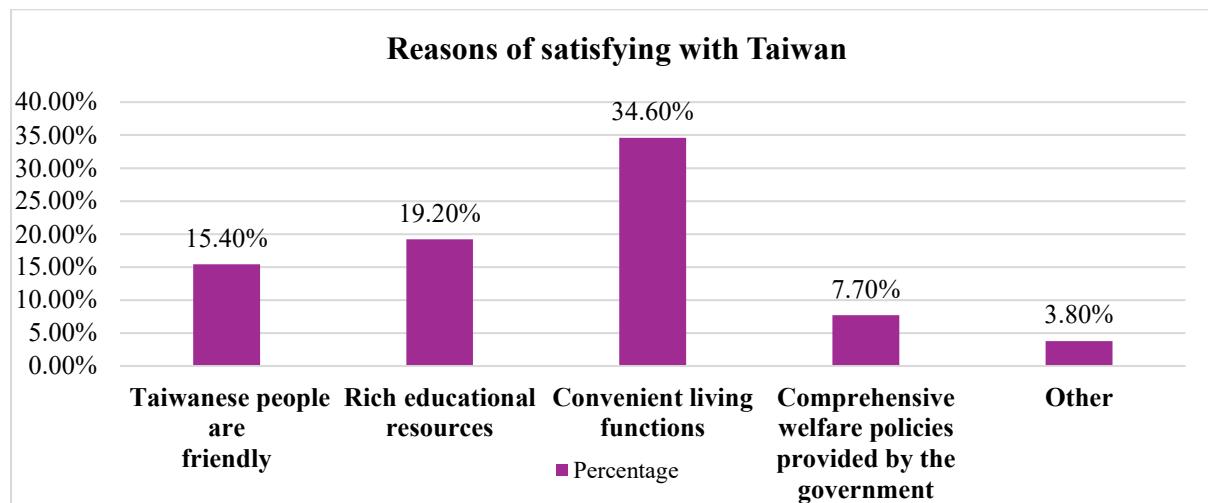

Figure 6. Reasons of satisfying with Taiwan

Figure 6. exhibited that majority of short-term immigrants feel satisfied with the convenient living functions (34.6%), followed by rich educational resources (19.2%) and

friendliness of Taiwanese (15.4%). The result indicates that there are proportions of both the new immigrants and short-term immigrants find that quality of life in doing everything become convenient is the key factor makes them get a sense of well-being of staying in Taiwan. Rich educational perform as the second rank of the satisfaction with Taiwan can be due to the reason that most short-term immigrants come to Taiwan are in purpose of studying. Third factor is agreed by both party that they feel comfortable with Taiwaneses' friendliness.

II.Social Recognition

Despite positive motivations for migration, all interviewees reported varying degrees of social discrimination or stereotyping within Taiwanese society.

Stereotypes

Interviewee VIET recalled that she has ever felt isolated from Taiwanese society, she is able to establish relationship with Taiwanese friends. However, when she once heard some negative critics from Taiwanese as

> *"Some Vietnamese get married to Taiwanese are in purpose*
> *of earning money in Taiwan because their country of*
> *origin is not as well-developed as Taiwan."[44]*

Similarly, Interviewee THAI mentioned that she felt isolated when she stayed with her husband's family. Her husband's family hold stereotypes and discrimination to her. They called her "foreigner" in their family, which made her feel disrespectful and psychological painful. Except the encounter of receiving disrespect from husband's family makes Interviewee isolated, she felt the other Taiwanese treat her normally and friendly.

In contrast, Interviewee INDO has never felt isolated since migrating to Taiwan, she is a Chinese Indonesian and she does speak Taiwanese (Hokkien). As a result, she felt not isolated

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[44] Interviewee VIET.

since she does not have language barrier comparing with other interviewees.

Hence, she still encountered stereotypical comments regarding foreign spouses as

"These foreign spouses married Taiwanese husband is
solely for earning their husband's money and send it back
to their country of origin."[45]

Interviewee PHIL keeps a more resilient attitude of migrating to Taiwan since she has never felt isolated from Taiwan under the situation of being treated as an "outsider" of her husband's family. She maintains a positive outlook despite similar experiences. She said that,

"As I decided to stay in Taiwan, I have made up my mind
about embracing everything."[46]

Discrimination

Among all the interviewees, only Interviewee VIET shared a concrete experience of discrimination. She reported having encountered sexual harassment from a Taiwanese individual who held the stereotype that Vietnamese women are involved in the sex industry. Interviewee VIET described feeling both irritated and horrified by this incident. Although she was frightened, she chose not to disclose the experience to her husband, fearing that he might blame her for failing to protect herself**.**

These findings reveal that stereotypes and discrimination remain persistent issues that undermine social recognition and emotional well-being among new immigrants. Thus, receiving proper support from Taiwanese society is important as well to new immigrants, which could largely improve their life quality in Taiwan.

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[45] Interviewee THAI.

[46] Interview PHIL.

Table 6. Social Recognition factors

	Interviewee VIET	Interviewee THAI	Interviewee INDO	Interviewee PHIL
Stereotypes	✓	✓	✓	✓
Discrimination	✓			

III. Social Networks and Community Support

1. Family and Peer Networks

Interviewees VIET and INDO receive substantial emotional and practical support from their families and friends. When they encounter challenges or difficulties in adapting to life in Taiwan, their family members and friends provide various forms of assistance, including financial help and guidance on everyday adaptation. Moreover, their psychological needs are initially met through these close social networks. The support derived from family and peer networks enables them to manage daily challenges more effectively and reduces their reliance on institutional assistance.

2. Social Networks Assistance-Hometown Associations

Interviewees THAI and PHIL rely heavily on social institutions such as the Kaohsiung New Immigrants Guild Hall (KNIGH) and social workers. Because they experience persistent stereotyping from their Taiwanese family members, they face difficulties integrating into their family life. Consequently, they seek support from broader social networks and institutions. For instance, PHIL received crucial assistance when her husband was incarcerated, which strengthened her sense of belonging and gratitude toward Taiwan's social support system.

3. Vocational Institutions

From all the interviewees, only Interviewee VIET reported participating in subsidized vocational training courses offered by local institutions. She specifically attended courses on nail care. Additionally, she expressed the hope that vocational institutions could expand their offerings to include training programs related to the beauty and hair industry.

These findings suggest that both familial and institutional support play a vital role in promoting immigrants' adaptation and psychological well-being. In addition to providing shelters to new immigrants. Social identity is one of the key drives to social integration for new immigrants.

Table 7. Sources of Support

	Interviewee VIET	Interviewee THAI	Interviewee INDO	Interviewee PHIL
Family and Peer Networks	✓		✓	
Hometown Associations as Social Anchors		✓		✓
Vocational Institutions	✓			

Questionnaire Result

當我有困難或煩惱時，我有可以傾訴的朋友或家人 When I encounter difficulties or worries, I have friends or family I can talk to.
27 則回應

Mean:4.22

Mode:4

● 非常同意 Strongly Agree
● 同意 Agree
● 普通 Neutral
● 不同意 Disagree
● 非常不同意 Strongly Disagree

48.1%
11.1%
40.7%
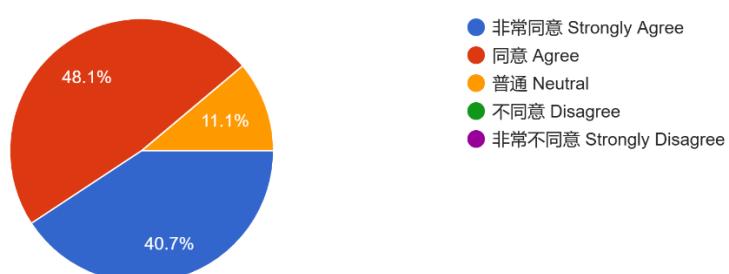
Figure 7. When I encounter difficulties or worries, I have friends or family I can talk to.

According to *Figure 7.*, 40.7% of respondents strongly agreed and 48.1% agreed with the statement that they have friends or family members to confide in when encountering difficulties or challenges. Meanwhile, 11.1% of respondents remained neutral on this statement.

This suggests that a majority of participants have access to emotional and social support networks—such as friends or family members—when facing challenges in Taiwan. The findings imply that short-term immigrants are generally able to seek advice or share their feelings through interpersonal channels, rather than coping with difficulties alone, which may contribute positively to their psychological well-being and social adaptation.

V. Social Integration

1. **Length of Adapting Taiwanese Society**

Each interviewee required a different amount of time to integrate into Taiwanese society. Interviewees PHIL and VIET both adapted within less than or equal one year. Interviewee VIET attributed her relatively rapid adaptation to the cultural similarities between Taiwan and Vietnam—such as comparable foods, festivals, and lifestyles—which helped her become familiar with and adjust to life in Taiwan more quickly. In addition, interviewee PHIL demonstrated an open-minded attitude toward living in Taiwan; she expressed a willingness to explore new experiences and avoid holding stereotypes or prejudices toward other cultures.

In contrast, interviewees THAI and INDO experienced a longer adaptation process. Interviewee THAI required approximately one to three years to adapt to life in Taiwan, primarily because she initially faced a lack of recognition and acceptance from her husband's family, which gave her a negative impression of Taiwan and delayed her development of a

sense of belonging. Interviewee INDO, despite having a Chinese cultural background, took the longest time—approximately three to five years—to familiarize. She explained that difficulties in sharing her own culture and forming social networks in Taiwan hindered her engagement with Taiwanese culture. Consequently, compared with other interviewees who had broader social networks, interviewee INDO found it more challenging to immerse herself in Taiwanese society, resulting in a relatively longer integration period.

Table 8. Length of Adapting Taiwanese Society

	Interviewee VIET	Interviewee THAI	Interviewee INDO	Interviewee PHIL
Length of Adapting Taiwanese Society	1 year	1-3 years	5-6 years	2-3 months

Questionnaire Result

是否曾經覺得自己與台灣社會格格不入 Have you ever felt out of place in Taiwanese society?
27 則回應

Mean:3.16

Mode:4

● 非常同意 Strongly Agree
● 同意 Agree
● 普通 Neutral
● 不同意 Disagree
● 非常不同意 Strongly Disagree
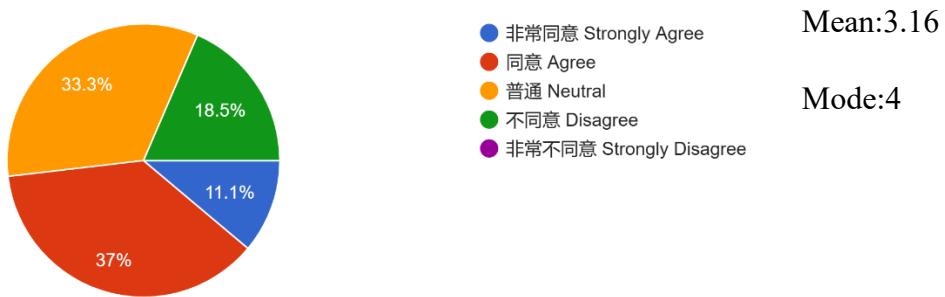
Figure 8. Have you ever felt out of place in Taiwanese society?

Figure 8. indicates that 11.1% of respondents strongly agreed and 37% agreed with the statement that they had experienced feelings of isolation while living in Taiwan. Meanwhile, 33.3% of respondents remained neutral, and 18.5% disagreed. These findings suggest that short-term immigrants—particularly during their initial period in Taiwan—often face challenges in integrating and adapting to the local society, a pattern that aligns with the

experiences of long-term immigrants. Although a minority of respondents expressed positive perceptions of integration, both short-term and new immigrants reported experiencing feelings of isolation and required time to adjust and develop a sense of belonging within Taiwanese society.

2. Regrets and Reflections on Migrating to Taiwan

When asked whether they regretted migrating to Taiwan, the four interviewees expressed divergent perspectives. Interviewees INDO and PHIL reported no regrets regarding their decision to move to Taiwan, attributing this to their independent and resilient personalities. Although they have encountered various challenges and hardships, they emphasized that the advantages of living in Taiwan outweigh the disadvantages they have experienced. Moreover, the relatively lower quality of life in their countries of origin further reinforced their decision to settle abroad. These factors collectively strengthened their determination to reside permanently in Taiwan and diminished any feelings of regret about their migration.

In contrast, Interviewees THAI and VIET expressed occasional regret over their migration experiences, primarily due to difficulties in family relationships, which represent their closest sources of support in Taiwan. The emotional distress and familial conflicts they encountered became major factors contributing to their sense of regret. Both interviewees indicated that the pain and challenges arising from these family dynamics at times made them wish to return to their home countries rather than continue enduring such hardships in Taiwan.

Table 9. Regrets of migrating to Taiwan

	Interviewee VIET	Interviewee THAI	Interviewee INDO	Interviewee PHIL
Regrets of migrating to Taiwan	✓	✓		

Questionnaire Result

我曾經後悔選擇來台灣生活。 I have regretted choosing to live in Taiwan.
27 則回應

Mean:2.06

Mode:2

● 非常同意 Strongly Agree
● 同意 Agree
● 普通 Neutral
● 不同意 Disagree
● 非常不同意 Strongly Disagree

25.9%

51.9%

18.5%

Figure 9. I have regretted choosing to live in Taiwan.

Data collected from the questionnaires, as presented in *Figure 9.*, indicate that 25.9% of participants strongly disagreed with the statement expressing regret over their decision to come to Taiwan, while 51.9% disagreed and 18.5% remained neutral. This suggests that most respondents do not experience regret about their journeys to Taiwan. The primary reason appears to be related to their temporary purpose of stay, as the majority came to Taiwan for specific objectives such as studying, working, or visiting friends. Unlike long-term or permanent immigrants, these short-term immigrants do not intend to settle in Taiwan for an extended period, which may explain their lower likelihood of developing feelings of regret about their decision of coming to Taiwan.

3. A Sense of Belonging and Identity

All interviewees expressed a certain sense of belonging to Taiwan, although the sources of this sentiment varied across individuals. For example, interviewee VIET associated her sense of belonging with the cultural similarities between Taiwan and Vietnam—such as shared festivals and religious practices—which facilitated her adaptation to life in Taiwan more quickly than the other interviewees.

Interviewee THAI took an example of her experience of being a volunteer in KNIGH:

> *"Not Until I came to be one of the volunteers of KNIGH, I*
> *did not know that Taiwanese is so warm-hearted and*
> *friendly, I feel I am part of this place since I entered."*

Being volunteers in KNIGH develops a stronger sense of belonging for Interviewee THAI, where she experienced Taiwanese friendliness firsthand.

As to interviewee INDO, since Interviewee INDO have had a comprehensive support from her Taiwanese family and friends, which consists with a sense of belonging that she feels refreshing when sharing feelings to families and friends.

Sense of belonging for Interviewee PHIL is rather precious than other interviewees. She insisted that the moment of receiving the warm-hearted care and assistance from social workers made her feel included.

All interviewee demonstrated a social identity to Taiwan since they have ever felt a sense of belonging to this land and decided to retain here for a lifetime. It is vital to know whether they successfully integrated to Taiwanese society.

Questionnaire Result

我能感受到來自台灣、朋友或同事的支持與歸屬感 I feel supported and a sense of belonging fro
people in Taiwan, such as friends or colleagues.
27 則回應

Mean:3.94

Mode:4

- 非常同意 Strogly Agree
- 同意 Agree
- 普通 Neutral
- 不同意 Disagree
- 非常不同意 Strongly Disagree
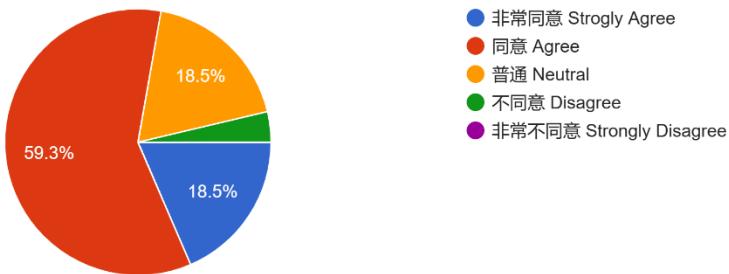
Figure 10. I feel supported and a sense of belonging from people in Taiwan, such as friends or colleagues.

As shown in *Figure 10.*, 18.5% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement indicating that they derive a sense of belonging from their Taiwanese friends or colleagues. Additionally, 59.3% of respondents agreed with the statement, 18.5% remained neutral, and 3.7% disagreed. This result suggests that even short-term immigrants—despite their relatively limited duration of stay in Taiwan—are able to develop a certain degree of social attachment and emotional connection to the local community. This result suggests that even short-term immigrants—despite their relatively limited duration of stay in Taiwan—are able to develop a certain degree of social attachment and emotional connection to the local community.

4. Development of Bridging Social Capital

Among all interviewees, with the exception of interviewee INDO, most participants reported that it was relatively easy to establish relationships with Taiwanese people. Interviewee INDO, however, expressed that she found it difficult to make friends with Taiwanese individuals due to cultural differences. She noted that when she shared her experiences or perspectives, Taiwanese people often failed to fully understand them. Despite these challenges, interviewee INDO showed little interest in forming new social connections with Taiwanese, as she already maintains a close circle of family and

friends.

Establishing interpersonal connections with Taiwanese people represents a form of bridging social capital. Such connections with members of the host society can facilitate the social integration of new immigrants and contribute to their upward mobility and improved status within the host country.

Questionnaire Result

我覺得與台灣人建立關係是容易的 I find it easy to build relationships with Taiwanese peopl
27 則回應

Mean:3.32

Mode:2

- 非常同意 Strongly Agree
- 同意 Agree
- 普通 Neutral
- 不同意 Disagree
- 非常不同意 Strongly Disagree

29.6%
14.8%
22.2%
33.3%

Figure 11. I find it easy to build relationships with Taiwanese people.

Results from the questionnaires, as presented in *Figure 11*., indicate that 14.8% of participants strongly agreed with the statement regarding building relationships with Taiwanese people, while 22.2% agreed and 33.3% remained neutral. However, 29.6% of participants disagreed with the statement, suggesting that a portion of respondents found establishing such connections challenging, primarily due to language barriers and cultural differences. In comparison, new immigrants who have resided in Taiwan for a longer period generally do not perceive building relationships with Taiwanese as difficult. This may be attributed to their greater familiarity with the local language and culture acquired over time. Consequently, new immigrants are more likely to develop bridging social capital with Taiwanese people than short-term immigrants. Furthermore, because short-term immigrants

do not intend to reside in Taiwan permanently, maintaining extensive social networks in

Taiwan is not as essential to them as it is for long-term immigrants.

5. **Cultural Exchange Feasibility**

Cultural exchange experiences varied across participants. Interviewee VIET and THAI

reported opportunities to share their native cultures with Taiwanese people, Interviewee VIET

shared that she has once been asked by her colleague regarding Vietnamese food and culture.

This memory makes her believed that Taiwanese society is willing to accept and embrace

Vietnamese cultures. However, interviewee INDO and PHIL find limited opportunities to

share the culture of their countries of origin. Nevertheless, Interviewee THAI has ever

attended a Thailand culture sharing activity held by KNIGH, she taught Taiwanese to make

Loy Krathong and share the culture of Thailand to them, which represents the existence of

multicultural events and immigrant organizations in Taiwan indicates gradual progress toward

a more inclusive society.

Questionnaire Result
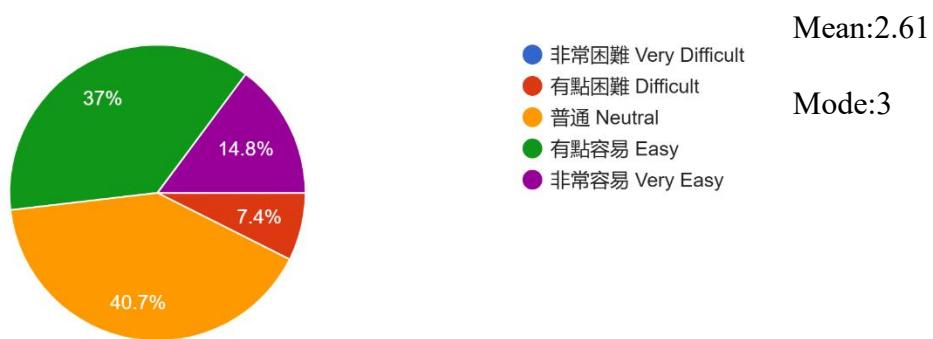
Figure 12. For me, sharing my original culture in Taiwan is:

The questionnaire results presented in *Figure 12*. indicate that 14.8% of respondents

reported finding it very easy to share their original culture in Taiwan, while 37% found it easy

and 40.7% remained neutral. In contrast, 7.4% of respondents perceived cultural exchange in

Taiwan as difficult. Overall, most participants expressed a neutral to moderately positive attitude toward the feasibility of sharing their native culture in Taiwan. This finding aligns with the qualitative interview results, suggesting that both new and short-term immigrants generally perceive cultural exchange in Taiwan as somewhat accessible, yet often accompanied by a sense of emotional neutrality or limited engagement.

6. Cultural Participation & Engagement

All interviewees expressed a positive attitude toward accepting local culture and social norms. Since the new immigrants all migrated from other Asian countries that share similar cultural backgrounds with Taiwan, they generally found it easier to adapt to Taiwanese culture. As a result, they demonstrated a high level of willingness to engage with local customs and experienced fewer difficulties with cultural adaptation.

Questionnaire Result

我能夠理解並接受台灣的文化和習俗 I am able to understand and accept Taiwanese culture and norms.

27 則回應

Mean:4.25

Mode:4

- 非常同意 Strongly Agree
- 同意 Agree
- 普通 Neutral
- 不同意 Disagree
- 非常不同意 Strongly Disagree

63%   11.1%   25.9%

Figure 13. I am able to understand and accept Taiwanese culture and norms.

Figure 13. Quantitative data presented in indicate that 25.9% of respondents strongly agreed that they are able to understand and accept Taiwanese culture and social norms, while 63% agreed and 11.1% remained neutral. These results suggest that the majority of short-term immigrants hold a generally positive attitude toward understanding and accepting Taiwanese

cultural values and practices. This finding is consistent with the interview results, in which new immigrants similarly expressed openness and a favorable disposition toward integrating into Taiwanese culture.

In summary, each interviewee required a different length of time to adapt to Taiwanese society. The findings indicate that although Interviewee INDO maintains a positive relationship with her Taiwanese family, her overall adaptation process has been the slowest compared to the other participants. In contrast, the remaining interviewees have developed stronger bridging social capital through active participation in volunteer work or establishment of relationship with Taiwanese, which has facilitated their social integration and expanded their interpersonal connections. Regarding cultural adaptation, Interviewees INDO and PHIL reported difficulties in promoting awareness and appreciation of their native cultures among local Taiwanese. This challenge is largely attributed to the limited opportunities and access available for Taiwanese to engage with or express their cultures within Taiwan.

Table 10. Indicators of Social Integration

	Interviewee VIET	Interviewee THAI	Interviewee INDO	Interviewee PHIL
Sense of Belonging and Social Identity	✓	✓	✓	✓
Development of bridging social capital	✓	✓		✓
Cultural Exchange Feasibility	✓	✓		
Cultural Participation & Engagement	✓	✓	✓	✓

VI. Immigrant Policy and Government Support

1. Skill and Language Training

When asked about governmental support, most interviewees expressed the need for greater economic assistance and skill development opportunities.

Interviewee VIET and PHIL highlighted that They need more assistance on seeking jobs such as offering language proficiency or skill-training courses since language barrier hindering the process of employment.

2. Financial Subsidies

Interviewee THAI and PHIL also suggested that the government provide financial subsidies to alleviate economic burdens for immigrant families.

Conversely, INDO, who faces fewer integration challenges, did not express any particular policy demands.

Table 11. Policy-related Needs

	Interviewee VIET	Interviewee THAI	Interviewee INDO	Interviewee PHIL
Skill and Language Training	✓			✓
Financial Subsidies		✓		✓

Types of Assistance needed the most in Taiwan (multiple choices allowed)

- Health Issues Caring — 3.70%
- Emotional Support or Psychological Assistance — 25.90%
- Access to Educational Resources — 29.60%
- Legal and Administrative procedures — 48.10%
- Employment or Job Searching — 70.40%
- Language Translation — 44.40%

0.00% 10.00% 20.00% 30.00% 40.00% 50.00% 60.00% 70.00% 80.00%

■ Percentage
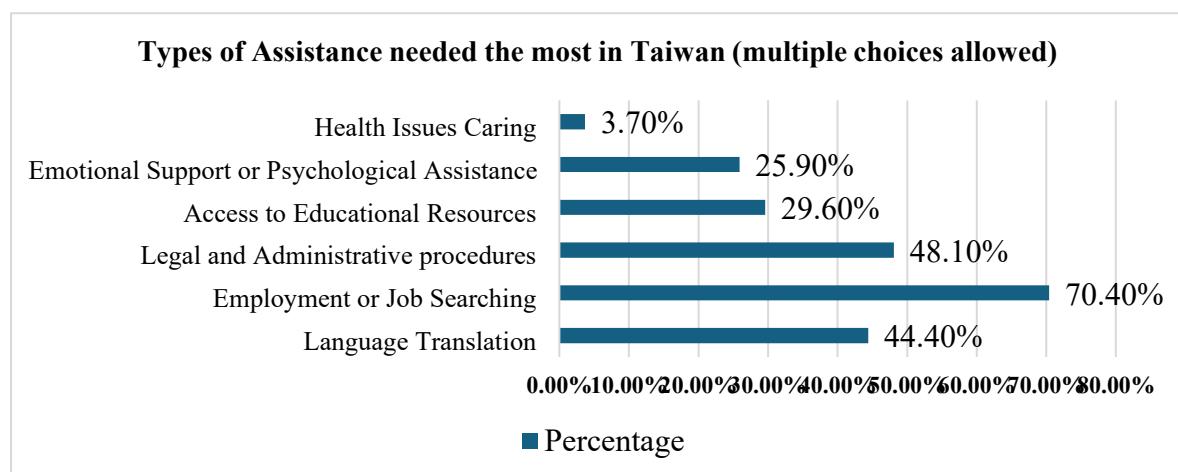
Figure 14. Types of Assistance needed the most in Taiwan (multiple choices allowed)

According to *Figure 14*., the primary form of assistance needed by short-term immigrants is employment or job-search support (70.4%), followed by assistance with legal and administrative procedures (48.1%), and language translation (44.4%) as the third priority. This finding aligns with the interview results, in which new immigrants similarly emphasized the need for job-related and linguistic assistance.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Finding1: Employment Opportunities and Quality of life: the main factors of retaining the new immigrants

Employment opportunities and overall living conditions exert a stronger impact on immigrants' perceived quality of life than cultural adaptation. This can be attributed to the cultural similarities shared between Taiwan and the immigrants' countries of origin in Southeast Asia, which facilitate to better cultural adjustment. Although instances of discrimination are discovered in this study most participants prioritize improving their financial situations and advancing professional skills.

From Chapter 2, literature review reveals that social integration is often understood to be primarily shaped by cultural factors such as social interaction, community participation, and social support. However, the findings of this study reveal that, for new immigrants in Taiwan, economic considerations outweigh cultural ones. Quality of life emerges as a key determinant for their decision to remain in Taiwan, as many participants reported migrating in pursuit of a more prosperous and stable life that their home countries could not provide. Consequently, economic well-being and quality of life are central to the long-term settlement and integration of new immigrants in Taiwan.

Finding2: Lack of Positive Recognition to the New Immigrants

According to the interview results, all participants reported encountered negative perceptions from local residents, including discrimination and stereotypes. Nonetheless, their decision to leave their countries of origin and migrate to Taiwan demonstrates significant courage and adaptability, as it requires stepping out of their comfort zones and confronting an unfamiliar social context. Such actions should be recognized and valued rather than met with prejudice. Consequently, instead of reinforcing stereotypes and discrimination, society should extend positive encouragement and appreciation toward new immigrants, acknowledging their contributions to Taiwan's human capital development and cultural diversity.

來台這些時間中，是否覺得自己不被台灣人認同？ During your time in Taiwan, have you ever felt unrecognized or unaccepted by Taiwanese people?
26 則回應

是 Yes
否 No

61.5%

38.5%
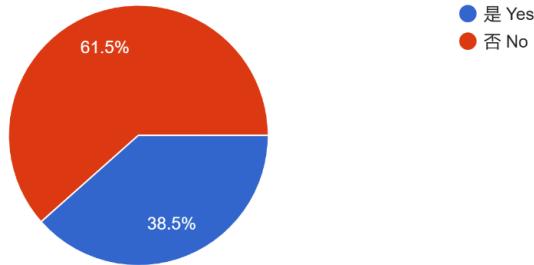
Figure 15. During your time in Taiwan, have you ever felt unrecognized or unaccepted by Taiwanese people?

Figure 15. shows that the majority of short-term immigrants did not perceive a lack of recognition from Taiwanese society, which contrasts with the experiences of many new immigrants. This difference may be attributed to the fact that most short-term immigrants come to Taiwan for academic purposes—a pathway that is often encouraged and supported by the government, thereby conveying a positive and recognized image to the Taiwanese public. In contrast, some new immigrants who have settled in Taiwan permanently may face subtle social prejudice, as certain Taiwanese individuals perceive them as seeking to benefit from the social and economic advantages associated with obtaining local citizenship.

Finding3: Family Relations as a Core and Significant Network, influencing Well-being.

Since most new immigrants in Taiwan are cross-national marriage migrants, family relationships play a crucial role in shaping their integration experiences. Dysfunctional family dynamics often hinder both social integration and emotional well-being. When family support networks fail to function effectively, external institutions—such as the KNIGH or social workers—serve as key alternative sources of assistance. These institutions provide essential services, including counseling, vocational training, and opportunities for community participation, which help new immigrants overcome difficulties and better adapt to Taiwanese society.

以下哪些因素會影響您在台灣的心理狀態?(可複選)Which of the following factors have affected your mental well-being in Taiwan? (Multiple choices allowed)
27 則回應

Factor	Count (Percentage)
經濟壓力 Financial stress	18 (66.7%)
孤單 / 思鄉 Loneliness / Home…	12 (44.4%)
歧視或偏見 Discrimination or pr…	6 (22.2%)
工作壓力 Work-related stress	10 (37%)
家庭關係 Family relationships	2 (7.4%)
缺乏歸屬感 Lack of a sense of…	6 (22.2%)
Lack of best friend	1 (3.7%)
I haven't	1 (3.7%)
Lack of familiarity with friends fr…	1 (3.7%)
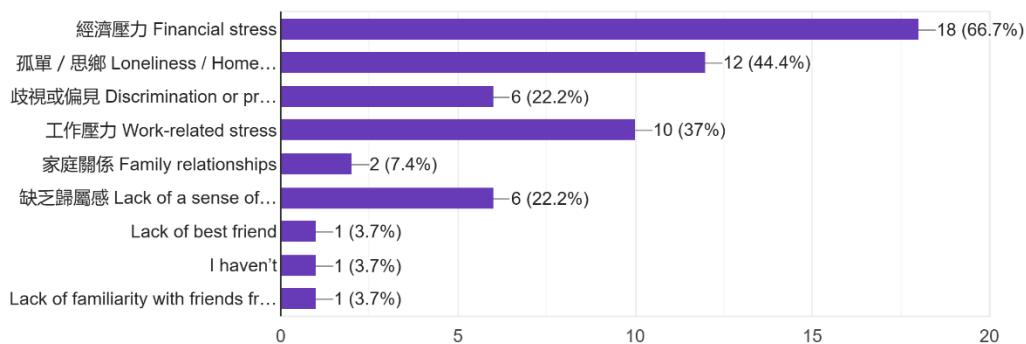
Figure 16. Which of the following factors have affected your mental well-being in Taiwan? (Multiple choices allowed)

Figure 16. indicates that financial stress is the most significant factor influencing the well-being of short-term immigrants living in Taiwan. This finding suggests that economic condition represents the primary challenge faced by individuals when residing in a foreign country. In contrast, the well-being of new immigrants is largely shaped by family networks, as many of them are foreign spouses whose emotional and social support systems are closely tied to their families.

Finding4: Comprehensive Social Networks and Community Support in Taiwan

The results from both the interviews and questionnaires examining social networks indicate that regardless of duration of residence—whether long-term immigrants who have lived in Taiwan for many years or short-term immigrants who stay only temporarily—both groups are able to access social networks and community support. The questionnaire findings further reveal that short-term immigrants, who come to Taiwan for specific purposes such as study or work and reside for a relatively brief period, are nonetheless able to obtain support through various networks, including family members and friends. These networks contribute significantly to their sense of well-being and adjustment while living in a foreign environment such as Taiwan.

Finding5: From Regret to Identity Formation — The Role of Belonging in Facilitating Social Integration.

Both qualitative and quantitative findings indicate that some immigrants and short-term migrants initially expressed regret about their decision to come to Taiwan, many eventually developed a strong sense of belonging to the host society. This emerging sense of belonging fosters the formation of a new identity aligned with Taiwan, motivating immigrants to settle permanently and view themselves as part of the local community. Through this process of identity formation and social integration, new immigrants contribute not only to nourishing Taiwan's labor force but also to enriching its cultural diversity and societal inclusiveness.

Finding6: The Importance and Applicability of Bridging Social Capital among New Immigrants

The results indicate that most new immigrants do not find it difficult to establish relationships with Taiwanese people, whereas short-term immigrants report greater

challenges due to unfamiliarity with the local environment and language barriers. Because new immigrants intend to reside in Taiwan permanently, they have a stronger need to expand their interpersonal networks, forming what Putnam (2000) defines as bridging social capital.

According to Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), individuals develop a sense of identity through membership and participation in social groups. In this context, organizations such as KNIGH play a crucial intermediary role by facilitating connections between immigrants and the broader society through cultural events, volunteer programs, and community engagement. These activities not only promote empowerment and social inclusion but also enhance immigrants' sense of belonging and integration within Taiwanese society.

Finding7: Policy Implications for Supporting New Immigrants in Taiwan

Current immigrant policies in Taiwan primarily emphasize cultural acculturation and adaptation, offering services such as counseling and human rights protection measures. However, findings from the interviews reveal that the most urgent needs of new immigrants are financial assistance and access to job or skill training programs that can enhance their economic well-being. This reflects the reality that many immigrants are primarily motivated by economic factors, migrating to Taiwan for its abundant employment opportunities and relatively advanced economic development.

Although the government's Relaxed Naturalization Requirements for Skilled Migrants policy aims to attract high-skilled professionals, the majority of new immigrants in Taiwan are employed in labor-intensive industries. Due to limited educational attainment and economic disadvantage, many of them lack professional skills or qualifications. Therefore, it is recommended that government policies expand their focus beyond cultural integration to include targeted vocational training and career development courses. Such initiatives would not only improve the economic stability of new immigrants but also strengthen their

willingness to remain in Taiwan and foster a stronger sense of belonging and citizenship.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

As Taiwan moves toward an aging society, the lack of the labor force has highlighted the irreplaceable role of new immigrants as a vital source of human capital. Their integration into Taiwanese society is not only crucial for addressing labor shortage but also for ensuring their own well-being as they adapt to a society markedly different from their countries of origin in terms of culture, language, and social norms.

This study, through a combination of in-depth interviews and questionnaire data with Southeast Asian participants, demonstrates that economic sufficiency plays a crucial role in shaping immigrants' well-being and integration experiences. While cultural adaptation remains an important aspect of settlement, the findings indicate that financial security and employment opportunities exert a stronger influence on their overall quality of life.

With these findings, Taiwan's current immigrant-related policies should consider rebalancing their focus—moving beyond cultural adaptation programs toward enhanced economic empowerment measures. Initiatives such as vocational and language training, subsidized professional development, and targeted financial assistance could effectively support immigrants' self-reliance and facilitate deeper social inclusion.

Ultimately, these policy adjustments would not only strengthen immigrants' sense of belonging and participation in Taiwanese society but also contribute to Taiwan's broader cultural diversity and economic prosperity.

For new immigrants, transitioning from being a resident to a full citizen is an important step in achieving a sense of belonging and fulfillment in their adopted country. Simply finding a job or finding a spouse is not enough; without actively embracing and engaging with the new society, immigrants may find that life feels hollow. It is not the original belief or motivation to be just a "resident" of Taiwan. While courage is undoubtedly essential, it cannot sustain a successful social integration and recognition. A satisfied and happy immigrant requires the motivation to build connections, foster social bonds, and bridge social capital between one's own home-town community and the society. It is through these meaningful relationships and active participation that immigrants can transform their experience from mere survival into a genuinely satisfying and rooted life. Then, the new immigrants will become true "citizen" of this country, Taiwan.

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

感謝您參與本次訪談調查，我們正在探討來自東南亞的移民在台灣的生活經驗、身心健康與社會融入情況。我們了解，生活在一個新的國家常常充滿機會，也伴隨挑戰——包括文化差異、語言隔閡以及適應新的社會環境等。 作為在台灣居住十年以上之新住民，您寶貴的經驗與觀點，能幫助我們更深入了解不同移民群體的生活。

您的參與將有助於提升社會對東南亞移民在台灣生活狀況的理解，並可能對未來相關的支持政策與服務有所幫助。我們將會保密處理您所提供的所有資料，並僅用於學術研究用途。

動機

1. 當初為何選擇台灣作為您想長期居住的國家?

2. 是哪些原因讓您決定決定繼續留在台灣?

社會層面

3. 您有曾經覺得和台灣社會格格不入嗎？您有可以分享心情的朋友或親人嗎？當你需要

幫助時，您都可以獲得幫忙嗎?您通常都需要哪些幫助嗎?

4. 您是否有在台灣社會中碰過任何您無法解決的問題嗎?

心理層面

5. 您是否曾經後悔居住在台灣?

6. 通常是哪些因素最影響您的心理狀態?(經濟情況?歸屬感?)

7. 您有從身邊的人（例如台灣的家人、鄰居、同事）感受到歸屬感嗎？

8. 您曾經感到最具挑戰的事情是什麼?您後來是如何解決的?

文化層面

9. 您能夠理解或甚至接受台灣的文化習俗嗎?

10. 您覺得要在台灣保留並分享你原本的文化是困難還是容易的？為什麼？

11. 您曾經有想融入台灣社會的念頭嗎？您花了多久時間適應台灣社會？

12. 您覺得和台灣人建立關係容易嗎？？

經濟層面

13. 您在台灣有遇過賺錢養活自己的困難嗎？

14. 對比台灣與您原本的國家，您覺得在哪邊要達到經濟穩定比較容易？

經濟層面

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRES

東南亞人在台灣社會融合經驗問卷調查

Survey on the Social Integration Experiences of Southeast Asians in Taiwan

填答說明：本問卷旨在了解東南亞人在台灣的生活經驗，請您根據自己的真實想法與經驗勾選最符合的選項。本問卷不記名，大約花費您 5 分鐘的時間填寫，所有資料僅供學術研究使用。非常感謝您的幫助。

This questionnaire aims to understand the life experiences of Southeast Asians in Taiwan. Please select the option that best matches your true thoughts and experiences. The questionnaire is anonymous, will take about 5 minutes to complete, and all data will be used solely for academic research. Thank you very much for your assistance.

Respectfully,

Wei-Ting, Wang, Senior student, Department of International Affairs

Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages

文藻外語大學國際事務系大四學生王維婷敬上

I. 第一部分：基本資料 Demographic Information

1. 國籍 Nationality

☐Vietnam 越南☐ Indonesia 印尼☐ Thailand 泰國☐ Philippines 菲律賓

☐ Myanmar 緬甸☐ Laos 寮國☐ Cambodia 柬埔寨

2. 性別 Gender

☐ Male 男☐ Female 女☐ Other 其他

3.年齡 Age

☐ 18–25☐ 26–35☐ 36–45☐ 46–55☐ 56 and above 56 以上

4. 在台居留時間 Length of Stay in Taiwan

☐ Less than 1 year 未滿 1 年

☐ 1–2 years 1–2 年

☐ 2–3 years 2–3 年

☐ 3–4 years 3–4 年

☐ More than 5 years 超過 5 年

5. 目前居住地（縣市）Current Place of Residence (City/County)：

_____

6. 來台原因（可複選）Reason(s) for Coming to Taiwan (Multiple selections allowed)

☐ Marriage 婚姻☐ Work 工作☐ Study 求學☐ Family Reunification 家庭團聚

II. 第二部分：動機層面 Motivational Aspects

1. 為什麼選擇台灣作為留學或居住的國家？ (可複選) Why did you choose Taiwan as the country to study or live in?

☐ Highly developed economy 經濟發展高度

☐ Convenient living conditions 生活機能便利

☐ Having friends in Taiwan 有朋友在台灣

☐ Plenty of job opportunities 求職機會多

☐ Abundant educational resources 教育資源豐富

2. 來台灣後，我喜歡這裡的生活環境。After coming to Taiwan, I enjoy the living environment here.

☐ Strongly Agree 非常同意☐ Agree 同意☐ Neutral 普通☐ Disagree 不同意☐ Strongly Disagree 非常不同意

3. 我喜歡台灣的主要原因是：(可複選) The main reasons I like Taiwan are

☐ Successful job-seeking experience 求職順利

☐ Friendliness of Taiwanese people 台灣人民友善

☐ Rich educational resources 教育資源豐富

☐ Convenient living functions 生活機能方便

☐ Comprehensive welfare policies 完善的政府福利政策

III. 第三部分：社會層面 Social Aspects

1. 是否曾覺得自己與台灣社會格格不入？Have you ever felt out of place in Taiwanese society?

☐ Strongly Agree 非常同意☐ Agree 同意☐ Neutral 普通☐ Disagree 不同意☐ Strongly Disagree 非常不同意

2. 在台期間是否曾覺得不被台灣人認同？During your time in Taiwan, have you ever felt unrecognized or unaccepted by Taiwanese people?

☐ Yes 是☐ No 否

3. 當我有困難或煩惱時，我有可以傾訴的朋友或家人。When I encounter difficulties or worries, I have friends or family I can talk to.

☐ Strongly Agree 非常同意☐ Agree 同意☐ Neutral 普通☐ Disagree 不同意☐ Strongly Disagree 非常不同意

4. 是否曾接受過台灣政府的幫助？Have you ever received assistance from the Taiwanese government?

☐ Yes 是☐ No 否

5. 在台灣最常需要的協助類型是（可複選）：What types of assistance do you need the most in Taiwan?

☐ Language translation 語言翻譯

☐ Employment or job search 就業或找工作協助

☐ Legal or administrative procedures 法律與行政手續

☐ Access to educational resources 教育資源提供管道

☐ Emotional or psychological support 情緒支持或心理協助

6. 是否曾遇到無法解決的問題？Have you ever encountered a problem in Taiwan that you were unable to resolve?

☐ Yes 是☐ No 否

IV. 第四部分：心理層面 Psychological Aspects

1. 我曾經後悔選擇來台灣生活。I have regretted choosing to live in Taiwan.

☐ Strongly Agree 非常同意☐ Agree 同意☐ Neutral 普通☐ Disagree 不同意☐ Strongly Disagree 非常不同意

2. 以下哪些因素影響您在台灣的心理狀態？（可複選）Which of the following factors have affected your mental well-being in Taiwan?

☐ Financial stress 經濟壓力

☐ Loneliness / Homesickness 孤單／思鄉

☐ Discrimination or prejudice 歧視或偏見

☐ Work-related stress 工作壓力

☐ Family relationships 家庭關係

☐ Lack of belonging 缺乏歸屬感

3. 我能感受到來自台灣朋友或同事的支持與歸屬感。I feel supported and experience a sense of belonging from people in Taiwan, such as friends or colleagues.

☐ Strongly Agree 非常同意☐ Agree 同意☐ Neutral 普通☐ Disagree 不同意☐ Strongly Disagree 非常不同意

V. 第五部分：文化層面 Cultural Aspects

1. 我能夠理解並接受台灣的文化與習俗。I am able to understand and accept Taiwanese culture and customs.

☐ Strongly Agree 非常同意☐ Agree 同意☐ Neutral 普通☐ Disagree 不同意☐ Strongly Disagree 非常不同意

2. 在台灣分享我原本的文化對我來說是：For me, sharing my original culture in Taiwan is:

☐ Very Difficult 非常困難☐ Difficult 有點困難☐ Neutral 普通☐ Easy 有點容易☐ Very Easy 非常容易

3. I have considered integrating into Taiwanese society. / 我有想過融入台灣社會。

☐ Strongly Agree 非常同意☐ Agree 同意☐ Neutral 普通☐ Disagree 不同意☐ Strongly Disagree 非常不同意

4. 您花了多久適應台灣社會？How long did it take you to adapt to Taiwanese society?

☐ Less than 6 months 少於 6 個月

☐ More than 6 months 超過 6 個月

☐ More than 1 year 超過 1 年

☐ More than 3 years 超過 3 年

☐ Still adapting 仍在適應中

5. 我覺得與台灣人建立關係是容易的。I find it easy to build relationships with Taiwanese people.

☐ Strongly Agree 非常同意☐ Agree 同意☐ Neutral 普通☐ Disagree 不同意☐ Strongly Disagree 非常不同意

VI. 第六部分：經濟層面 Economic Aspects

1. 我曾在台灣遇過經濟困難（如找不到工作、收入不足）。I have experienced financial difficulties in Taiwan (e.g., unemployment, insufficient income).

☐ Never happened 從未發生☐ Happened a few times 偶爾發生☐ Happened often 經常發生☐ Always happened 總是如此

2. 相較於原本的國家，我覺得在台灣達到經濟穩定較為容易。Compared to my home country, I find it easier to achieve financial stability in Taiwan.

☐ Much easier 容易很多☐ Easier 比較容易☐ About the same 差不多☐ More difficult 比較困難☐ Very difficult 非常困難

VII. 經驗分享 Experience Sharing

開放性問題（可選填） Open-Ended Questions (Optional)

您是否願意分享在台灣生活中，讓您印象深刻的一次經驗？Would you be willing to share a memorable experience you've had while living in Taiwan?

:

您有什麼建議，希望台灣社會能更友善地對待外國人?Do you have any suggestions for how Taiwanese society could be more friendly and welcoming to foreigners?

:

問卷結束 End of Questionnaire

Thank you for your participation. Your responses will remain confidential and will be used solely for academic research purposes.

感謝您的參與，您的回答將保密，並僅用於學術研究之目的。

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