

Access to social security policies for migrant workers: A case study in Hanoi, Vietnam



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ABSTRACT

Migrant workers play an important role in the socio-economic development of both their places of origin and destination. However, they often face significant challenges in accessing social security policies. This study investigates the accessibility of social security policies for migrant workers in Hanoi, Vietnam, focusing on those employed in both formal and informal sectors. A qualitative research method was used, including document analysis and in-depth interviews. The findings reveal notable differences between the two groups: migrant workers in the formal sector have better access to labor market policies, insurance, education, and social services, while those in the informal sector face many more obstacles. The study provides new data on migrant workers' access to social security and offers practical insights that may help shape future policies on migrant labor management and national social protection systems.

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1. Introduction

Humans are exposed to various risks throughout their lives, such as natural, environmental, health, life cycle, economic, social, and political risks. Participation in the social security system is considered a positive measure to help people reduce risks in life and ensure the sustainable development of the community (Hong and Ríos-Rull, 2007). In addition, social security is also an important tool to achieve the UN's 2030 sustainable development goal "Leaving no one behind" and to "end poverty in all its forms everywhere" (UN, 2015). Therefore, Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 stipulated social security as one of the basic human rights. Social security has become one of the three basic components constituting the system of social policies (Social Security, Promotion of Social Development and Sectoral Policies) (Cecchini and Martínez, 2012). Social protection encompasses policies and programs aimed at alleviating poverty

and vulnerability by improving labor market efficiency and mitigating risks. Beyond its economic function, social security plays a broader role in safeguarding overall well-being and stability in people's lives.

Although significant progress has been made in expanding social security in recent years, inequalities in access to such policies remain in many countries. According to the ILO (2023), the COVID-19 pandemic exposed deep disparities and major gaps in social security coverage, including the number and scope of available schemes and the adequacy of benefits. In Europe and Central Asia, social security coverage reached 83.9%, and in the Americas 64.3%, both well above the global average of 46.9%. By contrast, coverage in Asia-Pacific stood at only 44.1%, in Arab states at 40.0%, and in Africa at just 17.4%, all below the global average. Within countries, disparities also exist, particularly between urban and rural populations and between local and migrant workers. Research by Hidayah (2020) showed that, in Indonesia, social security policy has equality between migrant workers and local workers; meanwhile, in Singapore, social security policy is only concerned with protecting local workers. Zhang et al. (2022) and Tan et al. (2016) pointed out that, while rural coal-exporting migrants who are registered in the countryside cannot pay health insurance and pension insurance, those

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registered in urban areas enjoy the same benefits as public employees or urban residents. Therefore, ensuring fairness in enjoying social security between migrant workers and local workers is an important solution to promote labor migration, towards the flexible development of the labor market and the development of the migrants' local economy.

This study examines the accessibility of social security policies for migrant workers employed in both the formal and informal sectors in Hanoi, the city with the largest migrant population in Viet Nam. Using qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews and document analysis, the research explores how migrant workers access social security policies, the difficulties they face, and whether differences exist between workers in the formal and informal sectors.

2. Literature review and theoretical basis

2.1. Social security

Understanding social security still causes a great discussion among international organizations, scholars, and policymakers. Major institutions such as the World Bank, the International Labor Organization (ILO), and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) approach social security as a system of measures designed to protect individuals against income loss caused by socio-economic shocks. The World Bank (WB), emphasizes the role of social security in reducing income vulnerability; the ILO highlights the societal responsibility to safeguard vulnerable groups through access to healthcare, family allowances, and income compensation in cases of work incapacity (Jensen, 2011); while the ADB views social security as a tool to improve labor market efficiency and enhance resilience to risks.

Regarding the policies constituting the social security system, there are also many different views. Schmitt (2011) pointed out two components of social security, including social insurance and social assistance. Similarly, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) provides a general model of the structure of the social security policy system, consisting of two levels: wherein social insurance serves to mitigate long-term risks, while social assistance and social safety nets provide emergency relief during crises such as natural disasters or economic downturns.

Dung (2010) proposed a three-level social security model including: Level I - Social insurance, including health insurance, occupational accident and occupational disease insurance, retired workers, and unemployed workers. Level II - Labor market policies including vocational training, retraining, job creation for workers of all economic sectors, regions and regions, and support for job creation (credit policy), finding a job (transaction services, information). Level III - Social assistance includes temporary emergency relief and permanent social assistance. Huong et al. (2013) said that social security policies include: Labor and employment

market policies; social insurance and health insurance policies; social assistance policies; and social safety net program (temporary).

In this study, the author relies on the views of Huong et al. (2013) when studying the accessibility to social security policies of migrant workers in Hanoi. Social security policies include Labor and employment market policies, social insurance and health insurance policies, social assistance policies, and basic social services. The purpose of migrant workers' approach to social security policies is to redistribute income to achieve the two goals of poverty alleviation and maintaining individuals' living standards throughout life, as Millar (2009) pointed out in detail in Table 1.

2.2. Migrant workers

Migration refers to the movement of people from one administrative unit to another over a certain period. According to the UN (2015), migration is "a form of spatial mobility... characterized by a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence." Lee and Kim (2020) defined migration as "a temporary or permanent change of residence," while Tsegay (2023) defined migration as the movement of people involving a change in usual residence across an administrative boundary such as a village, town, district, or country, thereby emphasizing its physical and spatial nature.

Migration is a widespread global phenomenon driven by various motives such as employment, family reunification, improved living conditions, war, or social instability. The "push and pull" theory explains the factors that drive people away (push) and those that attract them to new places (pull). Among migrants, migrant workers are those of working age who move primarily for employment purposes. As early as the late 19th century, E.G. Ravenstein observed that most migrants left their homes in search of higher pay or more attractive work. To date, many studies have confirmed that job search is the most important driver of migration. The report of the ILO (2023) showed that international labor migration accounted for 75.23 % of the total number of international migrants in 2020.

There are two main types of labor migration: international and internal. This distinction leads to significant differences in access to social protection systems. Neoclassical economic theory views migration because of imbalances in labor supply and demand, income levels, and development between regions (Fan, 2019; Lipton, 1980). The greater the disparity, the stronger the migratory flows, but migrant workers often lack adequate coverage by social protection systems at the destination. From a household perspective, migration is considered a strategy to increase income and reduce risks. However, migrants often do not receive full social protection, making both them and their families more vulnerable. Chen and Zhang (2018) identified limited rural healthcare and pension systems as key push factors, while Black et al. (2011) highlighted

better education and healthcare services as major pull factors.

Although migration generates income for households and contributes to local economic development, it also alters family structures, increases dependency, and creates financial risks. At the societal level, migration may exacerbate

inequality, cause labor shortages in the origin areas, and place significant pressure on the social protection infrastructure at destinations. When social protection systems fail to keep pace with labor mobility, migrants are often left outside the safety net, heightening their vulnerability and social injustice.

Table 1: Research framework on social security policy for immigrant workers

Criteria	Labor market and employment policies support policies	Social insurance policies	Social assistance policies	Basic social services
Purpose	Ensure optimal allocation of resources; promote sustainable employment; reduce unemployment; protect and support vulnerable groups.	Protect individuals' income against life-cycle risks through a contributory mechanism; minimize losses due to reduced work capacity.	Compensate for income shortages among the poor and vulnerable; ensure minimum living standards; enhance access to social services.	Meet essential needs for health, education, information, and basic welfare for all, especially disadvantaged groups.
Operational mechanism	Provide public employment services, vocational training, career counseling, job matching, and support for credit access and job creation.	Implement compulsory or voluntary contributions to insurance funds managed by the state or private entities; provide benefits according to risk levels and legal provisions.	Deliver non-contributory cash or in-kind assistance through targeted or periodic programs.	Provide services through public and non-public systems, ensuring universal and equitable access.
Policy instruments	Vocational training; employment support; labor market information; entrepreneurship support; preferential credit schemes.	Compulsory social insurance; voluntary social insurance; unemployment insurance; health insurance.	Regular or emergency allowances; livelihood support; multidimensional poverty reduction programs; social protection services.	Healthcare; education; employment services; social work; housing; clean water; communication access.
Target beneficiaries	Unemployed individuals, youth, informal workers, women, and vulnerable groups.	Contracted employees, voluntary social insurance participants, and students enrolled in health insurance.	Poor and near-poor populations, people with disabilities, the elderly without pensions, and disaster victims.	The entire population, especially those in hardship, remote areas, or affected by natural disasters and epidemics.

2.3. Access to social security policies for migrant workers

One of the major negative effects of labor migration on the immigrant sector is creating pressure on social security for local authorities. The provision of public services will require a significant amount of financial funds, which will increase the financial burden on the immigrant sector. Therefore, in many cases, there is an imbalance in access to social security between migrant workers and local workers. Migrant workers may face many difficulties in accessing health care, education, the labor market, housing, or other social security services. Many countries provide social protection policies for migrant workers according to the provisions of the International Declaration of Human Rights (Hidayah, 2020; Wang, 2011). Research results by Hidayah (2020) showed that Indonesia has provided protection for migrant workers in a similar way to local workers, while Singapore only provides social security for migrant workers. Research results by Chen and Zhang (2018) showed that workers migrating to big cities often enjoy better medical care and pension insurance than in rural areas; Similarly, research by Black et al. (2011) suggests that immigrant workers often enjoy better health care and higher education. Research on the access to social security policies of migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, (Choudhari, 2020) said that migrant workers faced many difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic, losing jobs and lacking food, lack of medical care, and inability to return home are the main difficulties. Similarly, in the study "Manufactured Maladies: Lives and Livelihoods of

Migrant Workers During COVID-19 Lockdown in India" by Adhikari et al. (2021) mentioned food and money insecurity, hunger levels, loss of livelihood and income along with the deadlock of "can't go, can't stay" for tens of thousands of migrant workers in Indian cities during the 68 days of the country being locked down to avoid the spread of Coronavirus (Adhikari et al., 2021). Research by Richardson and Pettigrew (2022) showed that, despite the great importance of immigrant agricultural workers to each country, to the agricultural economy and food security, many workers still face policy challenges and mistreatment that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. By comparing the ability of immigrant agricultural workers to access social security policies in three countries: Italy, Canada and Thailand during the COVID-19 pandemic, the authors found that migrant agricultural workers in all three countries all face abuse, stemming from the huge power imbalance between migrant agricultural workers and employers as well as the precarious employment conditions created by the policies. All countries have failed to protect migrant workers during the pandemic due to their failure to provide basic social security services. Although there are many studies on migrant workers' access to social security policies, they seem to focus more on international migrant workers. That makes it necessary to build a social security network that is fair for both migrant workers and local workers.

Based on the above arguments, we construct the analytical framework for studying migrant labor as shown in Fig. 1.

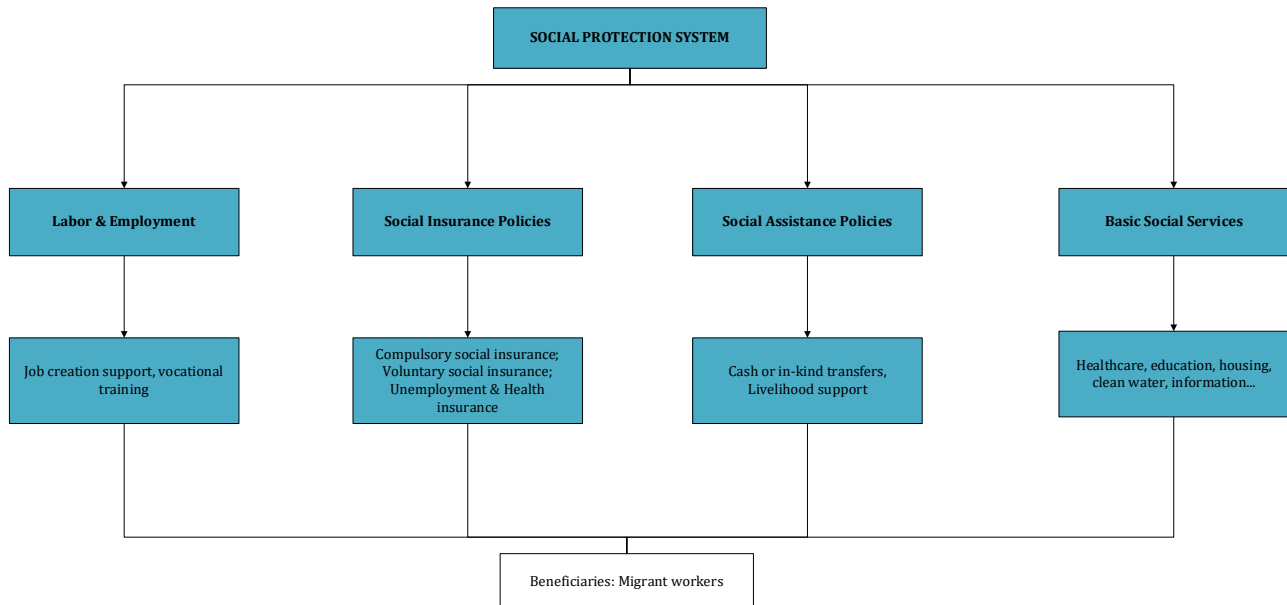


Fig. 1: Social security approach for migrant workers

3. Methodology

The document research technique used in this study is expected to allow the collection of rich texts on the ability to access social security policies of migrant workers. The author has read documents on Scholar with the keywords "social security" and "migrant workers" to understand how authors around the world research the ability to access social security of migrant workers. In addition, the author has conducted a narrative investigation on the ability of migrant workers to access social security policies in the place of immigration, paying special attention to their practical experiences and their families, using in-depth interview techniques. In this way, the author can further explore the causes affecting the ability to access social security policies of migrant workers and provide a basic understanding to the interviewees. This is an approach that allows for the existence of structured, flexible, subjective, and dynamic realities that are assigned different meanings and interpretations and shaped in political, cultural, and social contexts (Maher and Dertadian, 2018).

While qualitative studies typically prioritize data richness over numerical generalizability, several scholars suggest that a minimum sample size of 30 is generally sufficient for basic statistical validity and analytical adequacy (Roscoe, 1969). Based on this, the present study employed maximum variation sampling (also known as heterogeneous sampling) to ensure the inclusion of diverse perspectives from migrant workers in Hanoi (Ollerenshaw and Creswell, 2002). The sample comprised 30 migrant workers from different occupations, age groups, and geographical areas. Among them, 10 were formal sector workers, while the remaining 20 were employed in the informal sector. "Migrant workers" in this study are defined as individuals who move from one province, district, or commune to another for work, while maintaining their household

registration in their hometown and returning periodically (seasonally, monthly, or annually). In addition, 5 labor and social security managers under the Hanoi Department of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs were interviewed to find out what they observed from their practice on the social security approach to social security of migrant workers. These are considered experts on labor and social security, and their opinions are more integrated thanks to their practical experiences.

The data for this study were collected during March and April 2023 and included 30 in-depth interviews with migrant workers in Hanoi and 5 with managers. Interviews were coordinated independently in different locations (office, home, or in different locations to ensure quiet and avoid interference from noise or other factors). Each interview lasted from 30 to 45 minutes. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. All participants were fully informed of the purpose of the study and were promised complete confidentiality. Interviewees' names are encrypted, and a pseudonym is provided to prevent identification and protect privacy. In addition, interviewees sent copies of their responses, and they were asked to review them, giving them the opportunity to revise, clarify, or add comments and details they had requested.

The interview began with a general introductory question, "Tell me about your hometown, current residence, occupation, and level of education," to help the author confirm the participants' status as migrant workers and gather basic demographic information, while fostering trust and openness. Following this, the discussion moved to the main focus of the study, with questions exploring participants' views on social security policies, the specific policies they had accessed since migrating to Hanoi, the challenges they faced in accessing these policies, and the aspects of Hanoi's social security

system that had supported or encouraged their family's settlement in the city.

These interview questions addressed the main research focus. Data collection and analysis took place simultaneously in a continuum throughout the investigation, based on the different perspectives presented by the participants (Rallis and Rossman, 2012). Data analysis is performed according to a process that includes three stages of condensation, coding, and classification. In the first phase of the (condensed) analysis, the author searched for pieces of data relevant to the purpose of the study under four main themes:

1. Access to the labor market and employment policies
2. Access to social insurance and health insurance
3. Access to social assistance
4. Access to basic social services (e.g., healthcare, education, housing, clean water)

In the second stage (encoding), the author encoded each relevant data segment according to the cognitive aspect it represents (LeCompte, 2000). Having grasped the nature of utterances in the second stage, the author gathered similar statements to generalize their meaning and deduce categories in the third stage (classification). At this point, the author re-adjusted the categories to contrast the non-confirmatory data with the emerging findings of the analysis (Richards and Morse, 2012).

4. Results

In Vietnam, social security is a central priority in the national development strategy, as improving both the material and spiritual well-being of citizens is considered the highest goal in building a socialist society. The study findings indicate a clear divide in migrant workers' access to social security between those in the formal sector and those in the informal sector.

Workers employed in organizations and businesses in Hanoi reported having easy access to employment policies that ensure a minimum income. They also benefit from educational financial support if needed. Students from poor households who migrate to major cities for education may receive tuition exemptions or reductions, depending on their poverty classification under the Ministry of Education and Training's policies. Additionally, as Hanoi is a dynamic economic hub with numerous job opportunities, migrant workers generally find it easy to secure employment. The city has seven employment service centers and a well-developed employment information system, enabling both local and migrant workers to find quality jobs. This accessibility to work opportunities encourages many migrants to settle in Hanoi. For example, Participant F1 from a northern province stated, "Good job opportunities and an active lifestyle are why I chose to settle in Hanoi... I want my children to grow up here rather than return to my hometown."

By contrast, informal sector workers face significant limitations. They cannot access Hanoi's vocational training support programs, as such programs are tied to the worker's permanent residence registration. Consequently, they often lack technical skills. As explained by Participant M1 from a government labor department, support programs are implemented in phases and target specific groups such as women, disadvantaged workers, rural laborers, and the unemployed, categories that typically exclude informal migrant workers. Similarly, public employment and poverty reduction programs rarely apply to them.

Vietnam's social insurance system includes four forms: compulsory social insurance (covering sickness, maternity, occupational accidents and diseases, retirement, and survivorship), voluntary social insurance (pension and death benefits), health insurance, and unemployment insurance. Views on migrant workers' access to these programs are divided. While formal sector workers and officials report no difficulties in accessing these benefits, informal sector workers face multiple barriers.

Formal sector migrants typically enjoy stable jobs and incomes, with employers paying insurance contributions as required by law. Claiming benefits such as health or unemployment insurance involves straightforward procedures. In addition, Hanoi offers opportunities to purchase private non-life insurance with more comprehensive coverage, making social insurance less of a concern for some. According to Participant F2 from a social protection office, social insurance is particularly important for self-employed or low-skilled workers, many of whom migrate temporarily and have no intention of settling permanently. However, participation in voluntary social insurance among informal workers remains low due to limited awareness, high contribution costs, unstable incomes, and perceived opportunity costs.

Regarding health insurance, formal sector migrants generally register in their hometowns, meaning their designated primary care facility is located there. As a result, they rarely use their insurance in Hanoi except in cases of serious illness.

Social assistance policies in Hanoi are provided in two forms: regular support and emergency assistance. Regular support targets vulnerable groups such as those unable to work, orphans, the elderly living alone, people with disabilities, individuals living with HIV/AIDS from poor households, and those with mental illnesses. Migrant workers rarely qualify for such benefits. In contrast, emergency assistance, such as that provided during the COVID-19 pandemic, has been significant for migrant workers. This included unemployment allowances, food aid, and tax exemptions for businesses. All interviewed migrant workers reported receiving at least one form of emergency support, and some received multiple benefits. For example, Participant M2, a company director from a central province, noted that while payment delays occurred, unemployment subsidies helped mitigate

the pandemic's economic impact, and his company benefited from corporate tax exemptions.

Interviews with social security managers revealed no formal policy distinction between migrant and local workers in access to social assistance. However, during the pandemic, informal sector workers experienced severe hardships due to the suspension of jobs such as seasonal labor, construction, motorbike taxi services, street vending, and domestic work. Many relied on charity, local authorities, or the Fatherland Front for financial aid and relocation support.

The COVID-19 crisis exposed systemic weaknesses in migrant workers' social security access. Despite proactive government measures, many migrants in the informal sector remained vulnerable. Workers recounted their struggles: Participant F3, a ride-hailing driver from a northern region, said, "I was quarantined, unable to work or return home, had no income, and lived on relief goods—sometimes going hungry when none were available." Participant M3, a construction assistant from a central province, described going nearly a year without income, relying on family support, and eventually facing food shortages. Participant M4 from the same central province recalled leaving school to work in Hanoi, only to lose his job six months later due to the pandemic—a period he still remembers with fear.

Economic pressures forced many migrant workers to continue working despite the high risk of COVID-19 infection, reflecting the harsh reality that survival often took precedence over health concerns—a sentiment captured by the phrase "rice is first, COVID is second" (Choudhary, 2020). The ILO (2020) highlighted the dual challenges faced by migrant workers during the pandemic: severe income loss (with 87.9% experiencing job loss or reduced wages) and prolonged separation from families due to lockdowns and social distancing measures. Compounding these struggles, research findings reveal inequities in government aid distribution, particularly for informal sector workers who encountered barriers such as unregistered residency, limited knowledge of support programs, absence during aid disbursement, and poor communication from local authorities.

In Hanoi, the social security policy includes five core social services: basic education, basic healthcare, minimum housing guarantees, access to clean water, and information provision for disadvantaged individuals and communities. In principle, migrant workers in Hanoi are entitled to these basic services under the city's social security programs.

Among these, access to basic education is often considered the most important for migrant workers. Hanoi currently has 1,156 preschools, 2,737 private childcare groups, and a total of 2,835 preschools, primary schools, and lower secondary schools. However, school overcrowding remains a persistent issue, particularly in districts undergoing rapid urbanization and high-rise apartment development.

This overcrowding significantly limits migrant workers' ability to secure school placements for their children.

Interviewed migrants reported frequent difficulties in enrolling their children in public schools. Public educational institutions tend to give priority to children holding a hukou, the household registration system that links eligibility to a person's official place of residence. Migrants without permanent registration in Hanoi face reduced opportunities for their children's admission, even though temporary residents are technically allowed to enroll. In practice, shortages of schools and classrooms further restrict access for this group.

Informal sector migrants face additional constraints. Many stated that their lives in Hanoi are unstable and financially strained due to the high cost of living and education. Consequently, they often send their children back to their hometowns for schooling. Moreover, informal sector workers are generally excluded from guaranteed housing and some basic healthcare provisions. One respondent noted: "We cannot afford to buy a house in Hanoi. We live in a crowded neighborhood with poor living conditions, hot in summer, and cold in winter. But we try to stay in the same place to avoid moving too often."

5. Discussions

This study reveals a fragmented landscape of social protection access among migrant workers in Hanoi, where sectoral affiliation (formal vs. informal) and administrative status (e.g., permanent vs. temporary residence) strongly determine entitlements. Migrant workers in the formal economy benefit from relatively smooth integration into state-supported employment policies, vocational training, and social insurance systems. These workers are often backed by their employers and thus meet the eligibility requirements tied to labor contracts and compulsory contributions.

In contrast, informal sector workers are largely marginalized by these services. Despite residing and contributing economically to Hanoi, their access to local policies remains constrained by institutional rigidities, including residency-based eligibility and administrative discretion. The voluntary social insurance scheme, intended as a safety net for informal workers, fails in practice to deliver meaningful coverage due to its design flaws—namely, high contributions, lack of employer co-payment, and poor outreach.

Moreover, while many policies are *de jure* inclusive (i.e., they do not explicitly exclude migrants or informal workers), they are *de facto* exclusive due to structural and procedural barriers. The Hukou system, though formally less stringent today, continues to shape access to essential services like education and housing. This reinforces spatial and social inequality, creating a subclass of urban residents who remain peripheral to the benefits of urban development.

The findings align with a growing body of literature on the dualistic nature of Vietnam's labor market and social policy implementation. Dung (2010) and Tri et al. (2021) highlighted that the structure of Vietnam's social insurance system is designed around full-time, formal employment, leaving out nearly 70% of the workforce engaged in informal activities. This study reinforces that structural critique by providing lived experiences of policy inaccessibility among migrant workers in Hanoi.

However, this study goes further by capturing the nuances in policy awareness and trust. Unlike many previous studies that focus solely on statistical coverage rates, this research highlights workers' skepticism toward voluntary social insurance - perceiving it as financially burdensome and of limited utility. This mirrors international findings in other developing contexts, where informal workers perceive insurance schemes as inaccessible and poorly tailored to their risk realities.

Another notable divergence from earlier studies is the relatively high access to emergency support during COVID-19 reported by respondents. While macro-level assessments (e.g., ILO (2020)) emphasized the limitations of emergency relief schemes, this study indicates that, at least in Hanoi, many informal workers received some form of support during the pandemic. However, the findings also reveal exclusionary mechanisms at play, especially for those lacking temporary residence or formal identification.

The exclusion of informal migrant workers from social protection in urban Vietnam is not solely a matter of limited funding or insufficient coverage. Rather, it stems from a fundamental misalignment between policy design and the lived realities of a highly mobile, predominantly informal labor force. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive reforms:

- Decentralize policy implementation and delink benefits from household registration: Urban centers such as Hanoi should be empowered to allocate vocational training and social assistance based on actual place of residence and demonstrated need, rather than formal household registration.
- Redesign voluntary social insurance schemes: Reducing contribution rates, introducing matching subsidies, and streamlining enrollment procedures could increase participation. Effective outreach should be conducted through trusted local networks such as trade unions, cooperatives, and community organizations.
- Expand portable and non-contributory social protection floors: Informal workers should have guaranteed access to a universal minimum package of social protection, covering healthcare and basic income support, irrespective of employment status.
- Invest in inclusive infrastructure and service delivery: Public education facilities and housing

projects in urban areas must be designed to accommodate migrant populations, ensuring sufficient capacity and removing discriminatory allocation practices.

- Develop inclusive emergency response mechanisms: Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic highlight the need for pre-registered, community-based databases and transparent targeting systems to deliver timely and equitable assistance during crises.

These policy measures are not only essential to safeguard the well-being of migrant workers but are also critical for the long-term sustainability of Vietnam's urban development and social cohesion. As the nation continues to urbanize and industrialize, inclusive and responsive protection systems will be key to preventing the deepening of urban poverty and the marginalization of vulnerable populations.

6. Conclusion

Reducing the number of dependents in the social security system and maintaining a dynamic, economically active population are priorities for policymakers in all countries. Migration, however, is an inevitable socio-economic phenomenon, and effective management of migrant workers can positively influence socio-economic development by contributing to labor market balance. Ensuring migrant workers' access to social security policies is an essential part of this management. A sound understanding of migration and the social protection system for migrants is crucial for designing effective policy interventions.

This study analyzes the accessibility of social security policies for migrant workers in Hanoi. The findings indicate that migrant workers in the formal sector have more favorable access to social security compared to those in the informal sector. Informal sector workers face numerous barriers in accessing vocational training, social insurance, and basic social services such as healthcare and education. However, workers in both sectors have relatively easy access to emergency social assistance, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Employing migrant workers is a key factor in developing a flexible and efficient labor market. To ensure social security for this group, policymakers should focus on reforms and implementation measures addressing informal labor mobility, vocational training, health and social insurance, housing, and basic services, enabling migrant workers to work with stability and security. Furthermore, effective administrative management of migrant workers is essential to ensure fairness and proper targeting of social security benefits.

Despite achieving certain results, this study has limitations. It relies on qualitative methods, primarily in-depth interviews, which may reflect the subjective views of respondents. The small sample size also limits the scope and representativeness of the findings. Future research should expand the

sample and apply a wider range of methods and techniques to better assess migrant workers' access to social security.

Compliance with ethical standards

Ethical considerations

All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their participation was voluntary. Informed consent was obtained from each participant prior to the interviews. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by using pseudonyms and removing identifying information from transcripts and publications.

Conflict of interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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