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Future State Attractiveness Amidst Political Economic Uncertainty: Building a Conceptual Framework of Young Talent Migration Intentions from a Public Policy Perspective

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Abstract

Increasing political and economic uncertainty (Political-Economic Uncertainty) has become one of the main challenges for countries in retaining quality young talent amidst increasingly fierce global competition. Most previous studies explain migration intentions through the push-pull factor approach, human capital theory, and institutional quality. However, these perspectives still focus on the actual conditions of a country and do not adequately explain how individual perceptions of the country's future prospects influence the migration decisions of the younger generation. Therefore, this article aims to develop the conceptual construct of Future State Attractiveness as a new perspective in public policy studies to explain the relationship between political-economic uncertainty and the migration intentions of young talent. This study uses a conceptual paper approach through a systematic literature synthesis on migration theory, governance, public policy, and talent mobility behavior. The synthesis results in the Future State

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Attractiveness Framework (FSAF) which positions Future State Attractiveness as a high-level multidimensional construct formed by six main dimensions, namely: Governance Confidence, Policy Predictability, Economic Opportunity, Career Mobility, Innovation Ecosystem, and Future Quality of Life. The proposed conceptual framework explains that increasing political-economic uncertainty tends to lower perceptions of a country's future attractiveness, which ultimately increases the migration intentions of young talent. Theoretically, this article contributes by expanding the migration literature through an integration of public policy and governance perspectives, while introducing Future State Attractiveness as a new construct to explain talent retention in an era of global uncertainty. From a practical perspective, this framework offers a conceptual basis for governments in designing policies that not only enhance economic competitiveness but also strengthen the younger generation's confidence in their country's future.

Keywords: The Attractiveness of the Country's Future; Political-Economic Uncertainty; Migration Intentions of Young Talents; Public Policy; Governance.

INTRODUCTION

The mobility of young talent has become a strategic issue on the global development agenda. Globalization, digital transformation, and increased international connectivity have expanded access for young people to education, employment, and a better quality of life across borders. Migration is no longer seen solely as a demographic phenomenon but has become an individual strategy to ensure economic security, career development, and long-term well-being. The World Migration Report 2024 recorded approximately 281 million international migrants, equivalent to 3.6% of the global population, with an increasing trend in the mobility of skilled workers and international students over the past two decades. In line with these conditions, many developed countries have implemented policies specifically designed to attract global talent through easier residency permits, research incentives, competency recognition, and quality workforce retention programs. Competition between countries has shifted from mere investment and trade to competition to acquire and retain quality human capital.

This phenomenon is further exacerbated amidst growing global political and economic uncertainty stemming from geopolitical dynamics, slowing economic growth, inflation, regulatory changes, technological disruption, and labor market transformation. In such a situation, individuals' decisions to stay or migrate are increasingly influenced by perceptions of a country's ability to provide stability, certainty, and future opportunities. The OECD International Migration

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Outlook 2024 shows that permanent migration to OECD member countries reached a new record of 6.5 million migrants in 2023, a 10% increase compared to the previous year and 28% above pre-pandemic levels. While permanent labor migration remained at a high level of nearly 1.2 million workers. One-third of OECD member countries even recorded record-high migrant inflows that year. This situation demonstrates that a country's competitiveness in the 21st century is increasingly determined by its ability to build an environment that reassures young people that their future can thrive domestically.

In the Indonesian context, this phenomenon is reflected in the strengthening public discourse regarding the desire of the younger generation to continue studying, working, or living abroad, known as "Kabur Aja Dulu". This phenomenon does not always result in a decision to migrate permanently, but reflects concerns about job prospects, the quality of government, regulatory certainty, and future career development opportunities. A YouGov Indonesia survey conducted between February 24 and 27, 2025, of 2,003 respondents showed that 41% of Generation Z are considering the possibility of moving abroad in the next few years, higher than Millennials at 31%, Generation X at 26%, and Baby Boomers at 12%. The same survey also found that Generation Z is the group with the highest level of pessimism regarding the direction of Indonesia's development at 37%, while Generation X is the most optimistic group at 40%. Motivations for migration that emerged include the desire to continue studying, obtain global career and business opportunities, and establish their own businesses with primary destinations such as Japan, Australia, and Switzerland.

These concerns are exacerbated by domestic labor market conditions. According to the National Labor Force Survey of the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) as of February 2024, 3.6 million Generation Z residents aged 15 to 24 were unemployed, representing approximately 50.29% of the 7.2 million unemployed in Indonesia. From January to June 2024, 101,536 workers were also laid off. This situation is also linked to the emergence of the brain drain phenomenon. The Human Flight and Brain Drain Index 2024, published by The Global Economy, ranked Indonesia 88th out of 175 countries. Furthermore, data from the Directorate General of Immigration at the Indonesian Ministry of Law and Human Rights recorded that 3,912 Indonesian citizens changed their citizenship to Singaporean citizenship between 2019 and 2022, with approximately 1,000 students aged 23 to 25 doing the same each year.

Nevertheless, Indonesia has also shown improvements in various talent competitiveness indicators. The World Migration Report 2024 ranks Indonesia as the 11th-largest country of origin for international migrants, with approximately 4.6 million people. Furthermore, the IMD World

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Competitiveness Ranking 2024 ranks Indonesia 27th out of 67 countries, up from 34th in 2023. The INSEAD Global Talent Competitiveness Index from 2019 to 2023 also recorded Indonesia rising 14 places to 75th out of 113 countries, the second-largest increase in the world after Albania. However, Indonesia still lags behind neighboring countries like Singapore, which consistently ranks at the top of both indices. This situation indicates that improvements in structural competitiveness have not been fully accompanied by increased confidence among the younger generation in future prospects at home. Furthermore, most research on migration intentions is still dominated by push and pull factor approaches, human capital theory, and institutional quality, which emphasize current conditions and do not fully explain how perceptions of a country's future shape long-term migration decisions. Public policy studies also tend to discuss governance separately without connecting it to the formation of community expectations, so that there is still a conceptual gap in explaining the relationship between macro uncertainty and individual decisions to migrate.

Based on these conditions, this study aims to introduce Future State Attractiveness as a new perspective in explaining the migration decisions of young talent. Unlike previous approaches, this concept places perceptions of a country's future prospects as the primary factor influencing an individual's decision to stay or move. Therefore, this study proposes the Future State Attractiveness Framework (FAF) as a conceptual framework that is expected to enrich the literature on international migration and serve as a basis for formulating talent retention policies in developing countries.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORY DEVELOPMENT

Political-Economic Uncertainty in Public Policy Perspective

Political-economic uncertainty encompasses the difficulty individuals and businesses face in predicting policy direction, institutional stability, and future economic conditions. This has led to a decline in public trust, a slowdown in investment, and an increased desire to seek opportunities elsewhere. For young people planning long-term careers, this perception of uncertainty is a key consideration in determining where to build their future.

From a public policy perspective, uncertainty arises from the interaction between governance quality, institutional effectiveness, regulatory consistency, and political dynamics. The greater the perceived uncertainty, the lower the confidence in the state's ability to provide a conducive environment.

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Young Talent Migration Intention

Migration intention is the strongest early indicator for predicting actual migration behavior. Unlike migration that has already occurred, migration intention reflects an individual's psychological readiness to consider moving as a future alternative.

For young talent, these decisions are no longer based solely on income differences, but also on the quality of institutions, civil liberties, legal certainty, equal opportunity, the innovation environment, and quality of life. The characteristics of the younger generation, which has broad access to information and high mobility, make them more sensitive to comparisons between countries, leading to decisions increasingly being based on future expectations rather than current conditions.

Limitations of Push-Pull Factor Theory

Lee's (1966) theory explains migration as a result of push factors from the country of origin and pull factors from the destination country. Although relevant, this theory has weaknesses:

1. More focus on the objective conditions that are taking place;
2. Lack of attention to the role of individual expectations and perceptions;
3. Has not explained the psychological mechanisms before the decision to move was taken.

These limitations require a new, more comprehensive approach.

Future State Attractiveness Concept

This concept is defined as an individual's perception of a country's ability to provide a stable, predictable, opportunity-rich, and sustainable future through effective governance, consistent policies, economic opportunities, career mobility, an innovation ecosystem, and a high quality of life.

Unlike the concept of Country Attractiveness, which describes current conditions, Future State Attractiveness is prospective—assessing a country's future capacity, not just its current state. This concept explains that an individual's decision to stay or migrate depends heavily on the belief that the country can provide a better future.

Dimensions Forming Future State Attractiveness

Based on the literature synthesis, this concept is built by six main dimensions:

1. **Governance Confidence**– Confidence in the effectiveness, accountability, and integrity of government institutions.

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2. **Policy Predictability**– The perception that public policies are formulated consistently, transparently, and do not change suddenly.
3. **Economic Opportunity**– Optimism about the availability of decent work, increased income, and business space in the future.
4. **Career Mobility**– Belief in the existence of a meritocracy system and fair and open opportunities for competency development.
5. **Innovation Ecosystem**– Perceptions of state support for research, technology, entrepreneurship, and digital transformation.
6. **Future Quality of Life**– Hope for security, health, education, environment, social protection, and family welfare in the future.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a conceptual paper approach, which aims to develop a new framework through theoretical synthesis and document analysis. The stages involved include:

1. **Integrated Literature Review**: Collecting and reviewing Scopus/Web of Science indexed scientific articles, academic books, international agency reports, and government policy documents.
2. **Theory Synthesis**: Integrating thinking from migration theory, institutional theory, governance theory, and public policy theory to find common ground and development gaps.
3. **Qualitative Document Analysis**: Review national development reports and talent mobility data to ensure the relevance of concepts to real conditions.
4. **Conceptual Framework Development**: Arranging the relationships between variables into a structured model that is ready to be developed further.

Conceptual Framework Development

1. Mechanism of Relationships Between Variables

   The proposed conceptual framework describes the logical relationships as follows:

   a. The higher the political-economic uncertainty → the lower the perception of Future State Attractiveness
   b. The lower the Future State Attractiveness → the higher the migration intention of young talents

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c. Future State Attractiveness acts as a mediating variable that translates macro conditions into individual decisions.

Conversely, a country that is able to maintain stability, policy consistency, and build trust will have a high level of future attractiveness, thus encouraging young talent to continue contributing domestically.

2. Conceptual Proposition

Based on this framework, four propositions are proposed for further empirical testing:

P1: Political-economic uncertainty has a negative effect on Future State Attractiveness.

P2: Future State Attractiveness has a negative effect on the migration intentions of young talents.

P3: Future State Attractiveness mediates the relationship between political-economic uncertainty and young talent migration intentions.

P4: Future State Attractiveness is a multidimensional construct consisting of six main aspects.

Supporting Figures and Tables

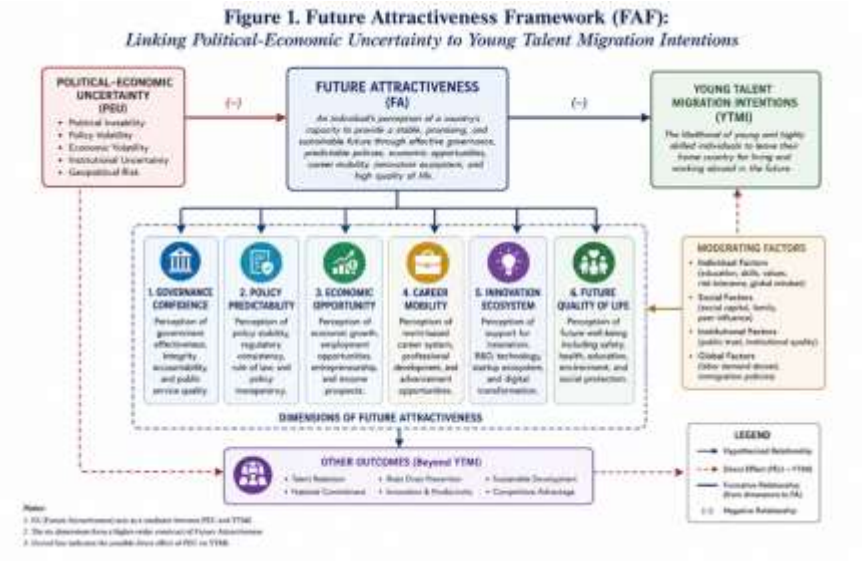


Figure 1: Future State Attractiveness Framework (FAF)

Information:

- H1: Political-Economic Uncertainty → Future State Attractiveness (-)
- H2: Future State Attractiveness → Young Talent Migration Intentions (-)
- H3: Future State Attractiveness mediates the relationship between the two variables.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Position of Future State Attractiveness in the Literature

Theory/Concept	Main Focus	Limitations	Contribution of Future State Attractiveness
Push–Pull Theory	Push and pull factors between countries	Only looking at current conditions, without considering future expectations	Adding a prospective perception dimension as a link between macro conditions and individual decisions.
Human Capital Theory	Migration as an economic investment	Lack of attention to long-term institutional capacity	Explaining the role of confidence in a country's prospects
Institutional Theory	The quality of institutions influences people's behavior	Does not explain the mechanism up to the intention of migration	Be a bridge between institutional quality and individual decisions
Country Attractiveness	Country attractiveness based on current conditions	Not future oriented	Expanding the concept into prospective attractions
Future State Attractiveness Framework	Perceptions of the country's ability to provide a promising future	—	Integrating aspects of governance, policy, economics, innovation, and quality of life

Table 2. Conceptual Definition

Aspect	Explanation
Construct Name	*Future State Attractiveness*
Definition	Individual perceptions of the country's ability to provide a stable, promising, and sustainable future through governance, policies, economy, careers, innovation, and quality of life

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Level of Analysis	Individual perceptions of state capacity
Perspective	Public Policy, Governance, Migration Studies
Construct Properties	High-level multidimensionality
Key Results	Young Talent Migration Intention

Table 3. Dimensions and Indicators

Dimensions	Definition	Conceptual Indicators
Governance Confidence	Perceptions of government effectiveness and integrity	Trust in institutions, accountability, quality of public services
Policy Predictability	The perception that policies are consistent and clear	Regulatory stability, legal certainty, transparency
Economic Opportunity	Perceptions of future economic opportunities	Decent work, increased income, business space
Career Mobility	Perceptions of career development opportunities	Meritocracy system, advanced education, competency development
Innovation Ecosystem	Perceptions of innovation and technology support	Research, digital transformation, entrepreneurial ecosystem
Future Quality of Life	Perception of future quality of life	Security, health, education, environment, social welfare

Table 4. Empirical Data Supporting the Phenomenon of Uncertainty and Migration Intentions of Young Talents (2023–2025)

Indicator	Values / Findings	Source
Migration intentions of Indonesian Generation Z	41% are considering moving abroad in the next few years	YouGov Indonesia (2025)
Open unemployment of Generation Z (15–24 years)	3.6 million people — 50.29% of the total 7.2 million national unemployed	BPS – Sakernas, February 2024
Termination of Employment (PHK)	101,536 workers (January–June 2024)	Ministry of Manpower of the Republic of

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		Indonesia, quoted by Kompas.com (2025)
Human Flight and Brain Drain Index Ratings	88th out of 175 countries	The Global Economy (2024)
Indonesian citizens change citizenship to become Singaporean citizens	3,912 people (2019–2022); ±1,000 students aged 23–25 years per year	Directorate General of Immigration, Ministry of Law and Human Rights of the Republic of Indonesia
Global competitiveness ranking (IMD WCR)	Rise to 27th position out of 67 countries (2024), from 34th position (2023)	IMD World Competitiveness Ranking (2024)
Global talent competitiveness ranking (GTCI)	Up 14 places to 75th out of 113 countries (2019–2023 period)	GTCI – INSEAD (2023)
International migrants from Indonesia	4.6 million people — ranking 11th in the world as a country of origin for migrants	World Migration Report 2024, IOM
Permanent migration to OECD countries	6.5 million migrants — a record high, up 10% from the previous year	OECD, International Migration Outlook 2024

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This article successfully develops the concept of Future State Attractiveness as a new approach to understanding the migration intentions of young talent. Unlike views that focus solely on current conditions, this concept emphasizes the importance of future perceptions as a key determinant of individual decisions. The resulting conceptual framework explains that political and economic uncertainty decreases a country's future attractiveness, which in turn increases the desire to migrate.

Practically, this provides an important message for policymakers: talent retention depends not only on material benefits, but rather on the government's ability to build trust and optimism that the future is more promising domestically. While still requiring further testing, this framework provides a solid foundation for theoretical studies and the development of national human resource development strategies

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