Migrant Worker Experience and Employer Survey 2024

Report on Findings



Manpower Research and Statistics Department
Singapore

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REPORT ON MIGRANT WORKER EXPERIENCE
AND EMPLOYER SURVEY 2024

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Highlights

Migrant workers' satisfaction with both their working and living conditions continued to improve. In 2024, 95.3% of workers were satisfied with working and living in Singapore, an improvement from 2018 (86.3%) and it is the highest level recorded since the survey began in 2011.[1] 96.7% of workers in 2024 indicated they would continue working in Singapore or return in the future, an increase from 91.9% in 2018. This reflects continued confidence in Singapore as a preferred destination for work.

92.3% of migrant workers would recommend Singapore as a work destination, up from 84.0% in 2018. The top reasons cited in 2024 were a safe working environment (84.4%), high salary (71.2%), and adequate worker protection (65.2%). 97.0% of workers agreed that the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) has been effective in protecting them and 97.0% also agreed that their working conditions were safe, up from around 87% in 2018 for both indicators.

92.0% of workers received their salaries digitally. In addition, 90.1% of workers reported receiving their In-Principle Approval (IPA) letter before commencing work, and 91.5% received salaries consistent with their IPA. In terms of daily living, a majority of workers (88.5%) reported that their current food arrangements – typically either cooking their own meals or buying food from stalls – matched their preferences, suggesting employers' responsiveness to worker preferences.

Migrant workers have high trust in MOM as well as their employer. 99.5% of workers said they would approach their supervisors or employers in the event of a work injury. 89.3% of workers found it easy to approach MOM on employment-related matters. Additionally, employers (60.3%) and MOM (45.0%) are workers' top preferred channels for receiving information about employment rights.

From the employers' perspective[2], sentiments toward the migrant workforce are generally positive. 70.8% of employers expressed satisfaction with the quality of their workers, and 75.2% of employers renewed the work permits of more than 80% of their workers on average. This points to a stable employment relationship. Employers are also proactive in retaining workers as 88.8% of employers would offer benefits to encourage workers to stay and 80.6% provided additional training to upskill their workers. These demonstrate commitment to maintaining a skilled migrant workforce.

However, access to skilled labour remained a concern. While nearly half (47.5%) of employers felt they had good access to migrant workers overall, only 27.3% said it was easy to find migrant workers with the relevant skills. These findings suggest there is room for improvement to enable employers to hire higher-skilled workers, particularly in more specialised roles.

[1] Where comparable data have been collected from past surveys of migrant workers conducted in 2011, 2014 and/or 2018, comparisons with previous survey findings are included in this report.
[2] The data pertain to 2024 - this was the inaugural run of the survey with employers of migrant workers.

1 Introduction

1.1 This report analyses the experience of migrant workers in Singapore, and employers' perspectives on hiring and managing their migrant workforce[3]. It is based on surveys conducted by the Manpower Research and Statistics Department,[4] covering:

a. Migrant workers' overall satisfaction with working in Singapore; pre-employment and in-employment experience; preferred channels of assistance and information; and perceptions of the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and their workplaces.

b. Employers' overall satisfaction with migrant workers; experience with the recruitment of migrant workers; and perceptions on access to and skills of migrant workers.

1.2 To ensure that the survey results can be generalised to the migrant worker population and the employers that hire them, the survey samples were selected randomly from sampling frames designed to be representative of the population profiles of migrant workers (including sectors in which the workers were employed and the nationalities of the workers) and employers of migrant workers in Singapore (including sectors which they were based in and the number of migrant workers they employ).

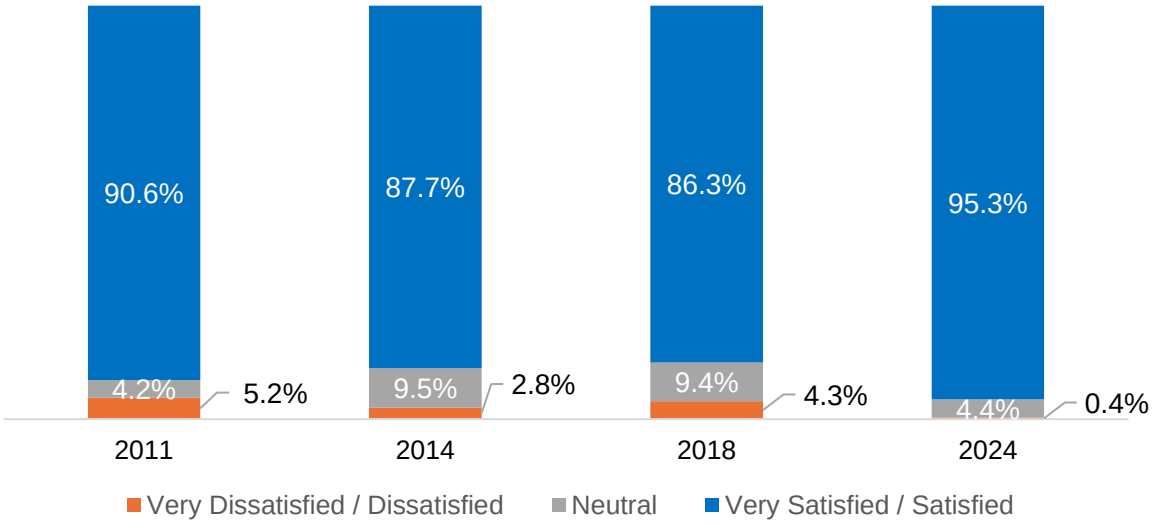
[3] For this report, "migrant workers" refer to non-domestic Work Permit (WP) Holders and "employers" refer to the firms that employ them.
[4] Where comparable data have been collected from past surveys on migrant workers conducted in 2011, 2014, and/or 2018, comparisons with previous survey findings are included in this report. For the survey on employers, this is the first run of the study.

2 Singapore as a Work Destination

2.1 Satisfaction with working and living in Singapore

2.1.1 In 2024, 95.3% of migrant workers indicated that they were satisfied with working and living in Singapore, which was an increase from 86.3% in 2018 (Chart 1). This is also the highest level recorded since the survey began in 2011. This suggests that working and living conditions have improved.

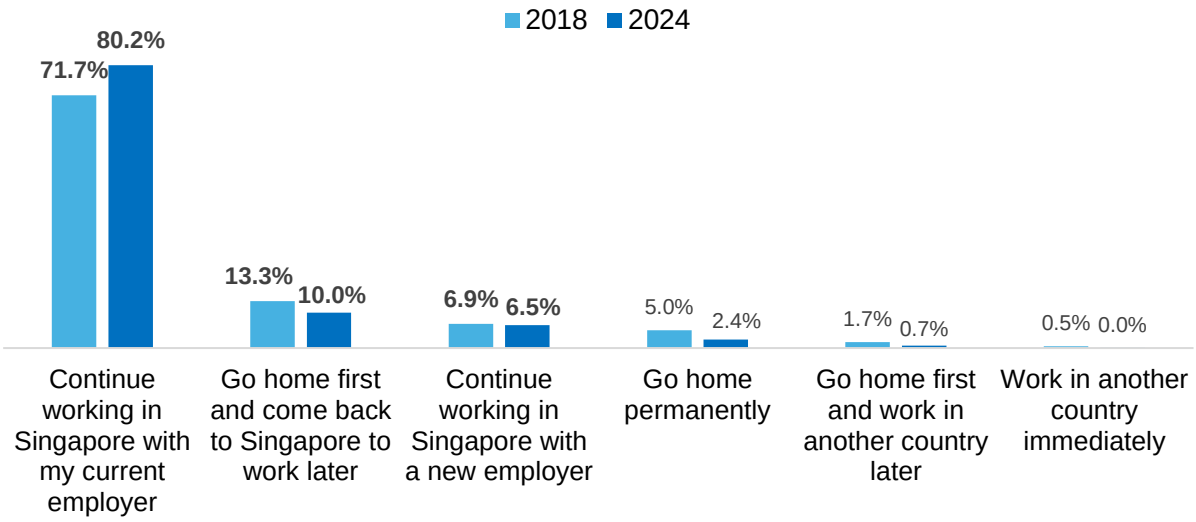
Chart 1: "Overall, I am satisfied with working and living in Singapore."



2.2 Future intentions

2.2.1 Most migrant workers planned to continue working in Singapore. When asked about their plans after their current contracts expire, 96.7% of migrant workers said they planned to continue working in Singapore – either with their current employer, a new employer or return to Singapore for employment in the future. This is an increase from 91.9% in 2018 (Chart 2). This suggests continued confidence in Singapore as a preferred destination for work.

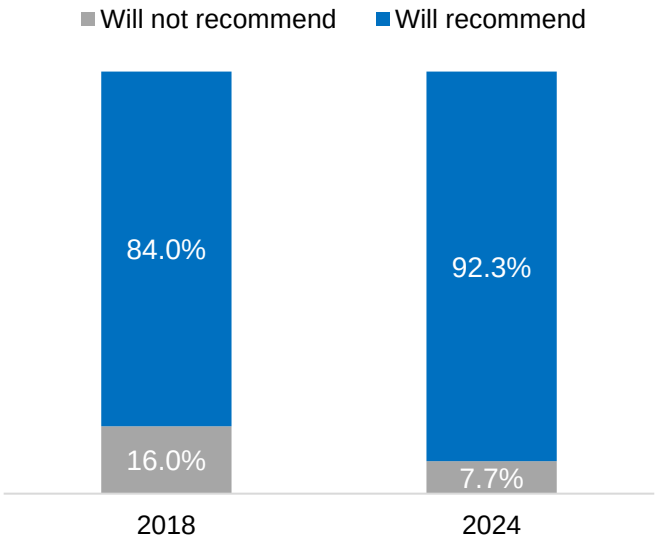
Chart 2: "What are your plans when your current contract expires?"



2.3 Recommending Singapore as a work destination

2.3.1 Most migrant workers would recommend Singapore as a place to work, and this sentiment has grown stronger. In 2024, 92.3% of migrant workers indicated that they would recommend Singapore to their friends and relatives as a place to work, higher than the 84.0% in 2018 (Chart 3).

Chart 3: "Would you recommend your friends and relatives to work in Singapore?"



2.3.2 A safe working environment, high salary, and worker protection were the top reasons migrant workers would recommend Singapore as a place to work in 2024. A safe working environment was the most cited reason, with 84.4% of migrant workers highlighting this aspect. High salary was the second most important reason, mentioned by 71.2% of migrant workers. Workers being protected here was the third most important reason, with 65.2% of migrant workers citing this. Table 1 shows the top 5 reasons.

Table 1: "Why would you recommend your friends and relatives to work in Singapore?"

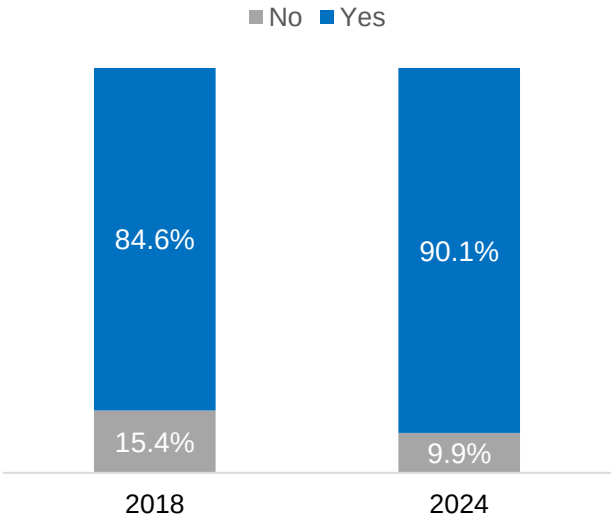
Reasons most cited [multiple selections allowed]	**2024**
The working environment is safe.	84.4%
The salary here is high.	71.2%
Workers are protected here.	65.2%
The living conditions are good.	46.0%
The jobs here are stable.	44.1%

3 Pre-employment Experiences

3.1 In-Principle Approval (IPA) letter[5]

3.1.1 A majority of migrant workers received their In-Principle Approval (IPA) letters from MOM before commencing work (Chart 4).

Chart 4: "Did you receive an in-principle approval (IPA) letter for your current job?"

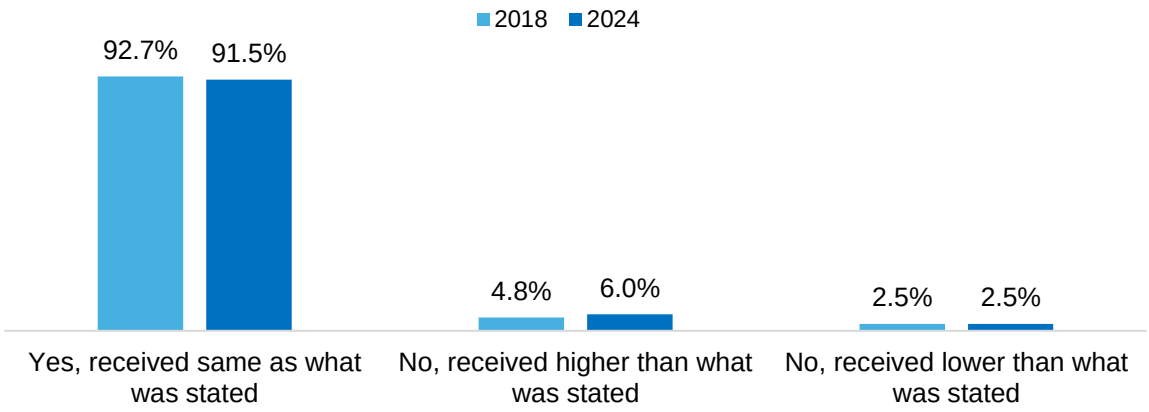


[5] An IPA letter is issued by the MOM's Work Pass Division upon a successful application of a Work Permit by an employer.

3.2 Receiving the salary amount as stated in the IPA letter

3.2.1 Among migrant workers who received an IPA letter, a majority went on to receive a monthly salary that matched the salary amount stated in the IPA letter. In 2024, 91.5% of migrant workers reported receiving the same salary amount as stated in their IPA letter, which is largely consistent with results in 2018 (92.7%) (Chart 5).

Chart 5: "Did you receive the salary amount as stated in your IPA letter?"

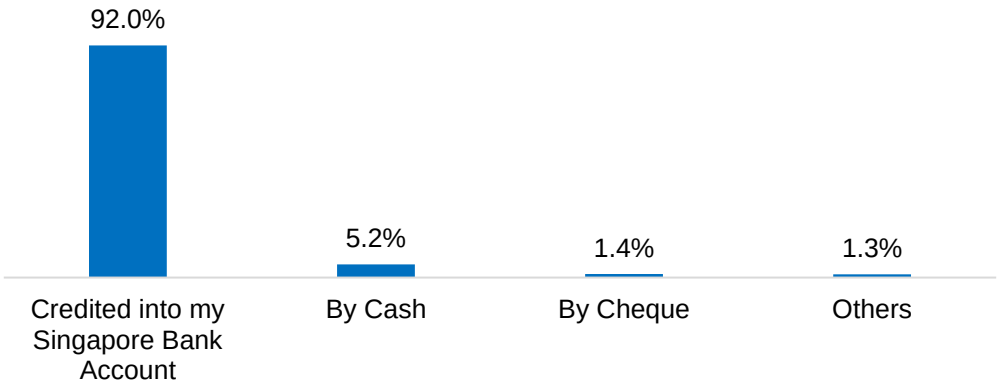


4 In-employment Experiences

4.1 Mode of salary payment

4.1.1 A majority of migrant workers receive their salaries digitally. In 2024, 92.0% of migrant workers had their salary credited directly into their Singapore bank account (Chart 6). The high adoption of digital salary payments offers migrant workers greater financial security, easier record-keeping, and improved access to banking services.

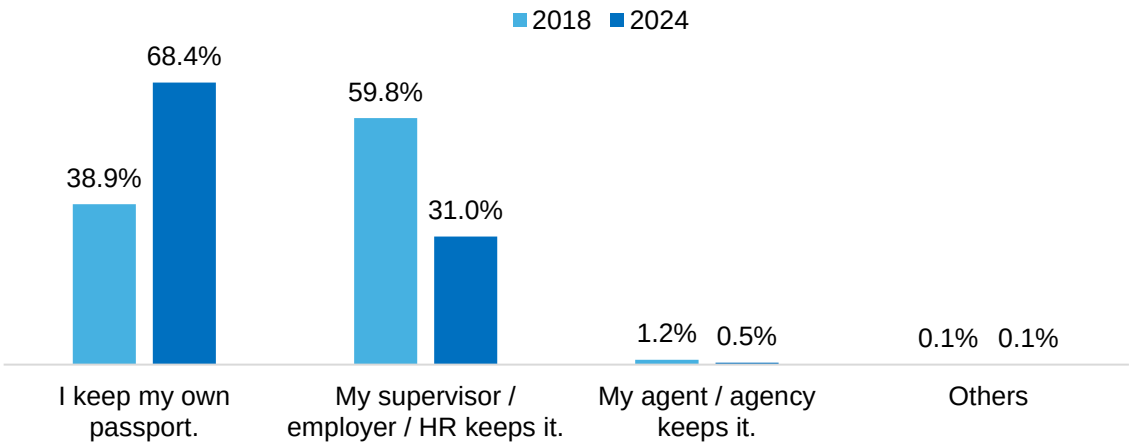
Chart 6: "How does your employer usually pay you your salary?"



4.2 Retention of personal documents

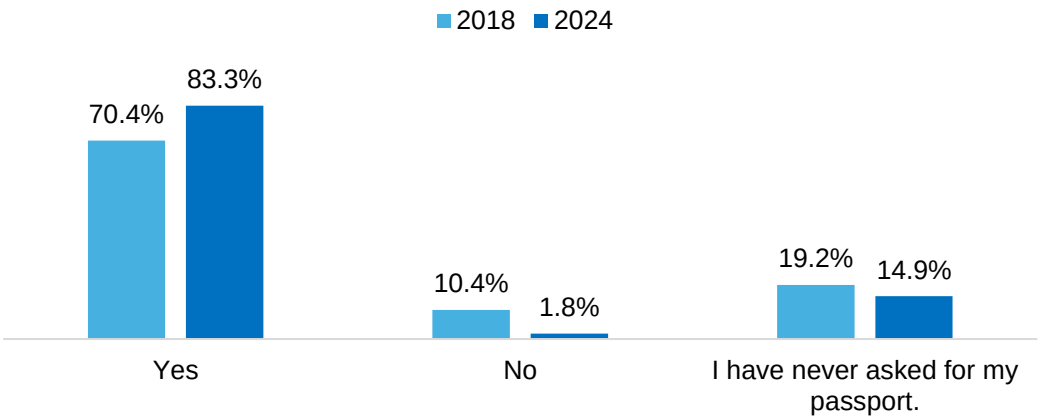
4.2.1 The proportion of migrant workers who kept their own passports increased, from 38.8% in 2018 to 68.4% in 2024 (Chart 7).

Chart 7: "Who keeps your passport?"



4.2.2 Among migrant workers who did not keep their own passports, most were returned their passports upon request. In 2024, 83.3% of migrant workers who asked for their passports had it returned to them, an increase from 70.4% in 2018 (Chart 8).

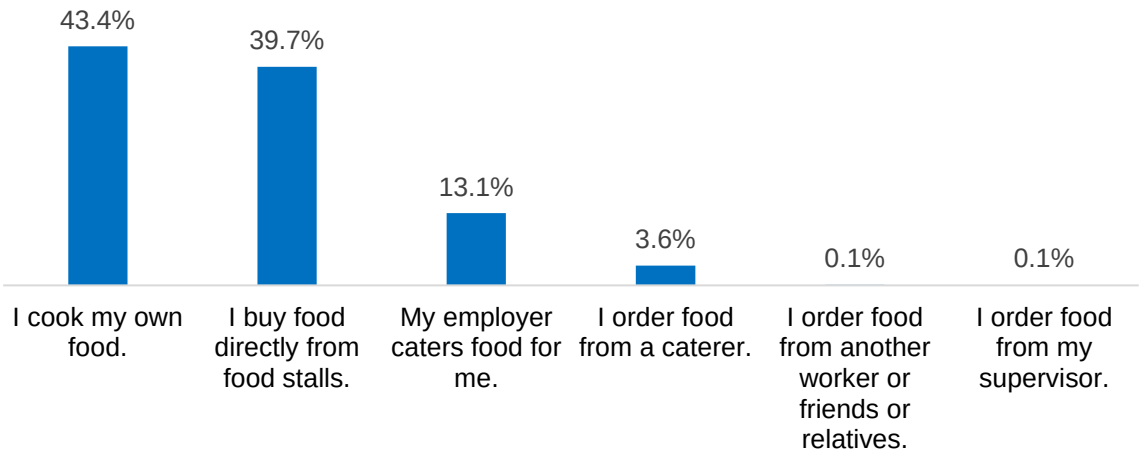
Chart 8: "Have your passport been returned to you when you asked for them?"



4.3 Food arrangements

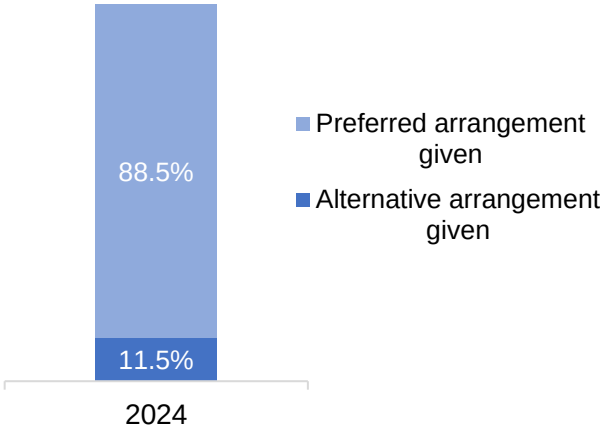
4.3.1 The most common food arrangements amongst migrant workers in 2024 were self-cooked meals (43.4%) and purchasing food directly from food stalls (39.7%). Employer-catered food (13.1%) was the third most common arrangement (Chart 9).

Chart 9: "What is your main food arrangement for meals when you are working?"



4.3.2 88.5% of migrant workers indicated that their current food arrangement was also their preferred choice, suggesting employers' responsiveness to worker preferences (Chart 10).

Chart 10: Proportion of migrant workers who indicated that their current food arrangement is their preferred arrangement for meals at work

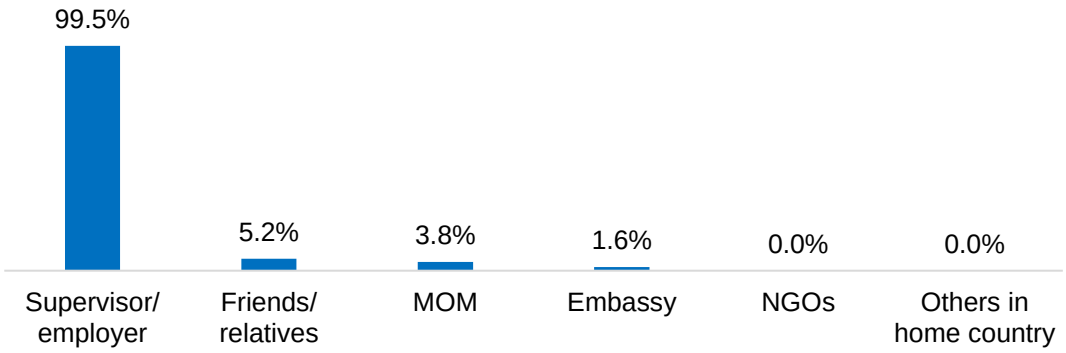


5 Channels of Assistance and Information

5.1 Channels of assistance for work injury

5.1.1 In 2024, almost all migrant workers (99.5%) indicated that they would approach their supervisor or employer for help in the event of a work injury. Other choices were less common, such as approaching friends/ relatives, MOM, embassies and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) (Chart 11).

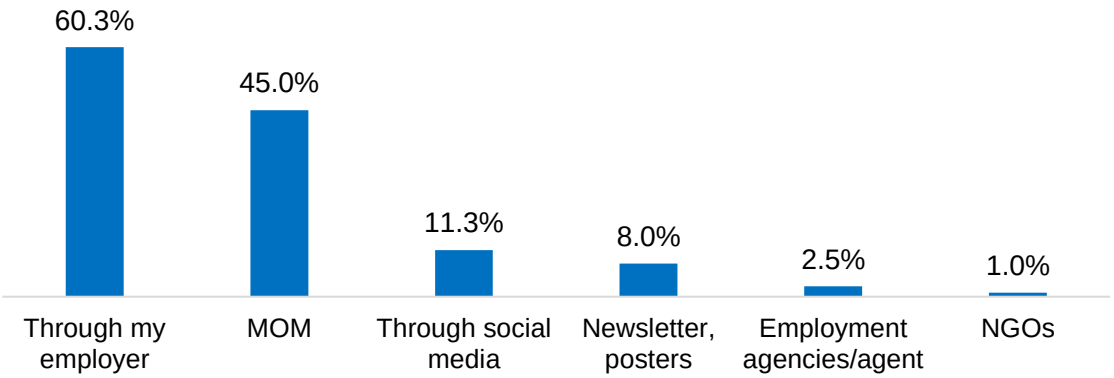
Chart 11: "If you suffer a work injury, who would you approach for help? (Multiple selections allowed)"



5.2 Sources of information about employment rights

5.2.1 Migrant workers primarily preferred receiving information about employment rights through their employers (60.3%) or from MOM (45.0%), indicating reliance on both immediate and official sources (Chart 12).

Chart 12: "How do you prefer to receive general information about your employment rights? (Multiple selections allowed)"

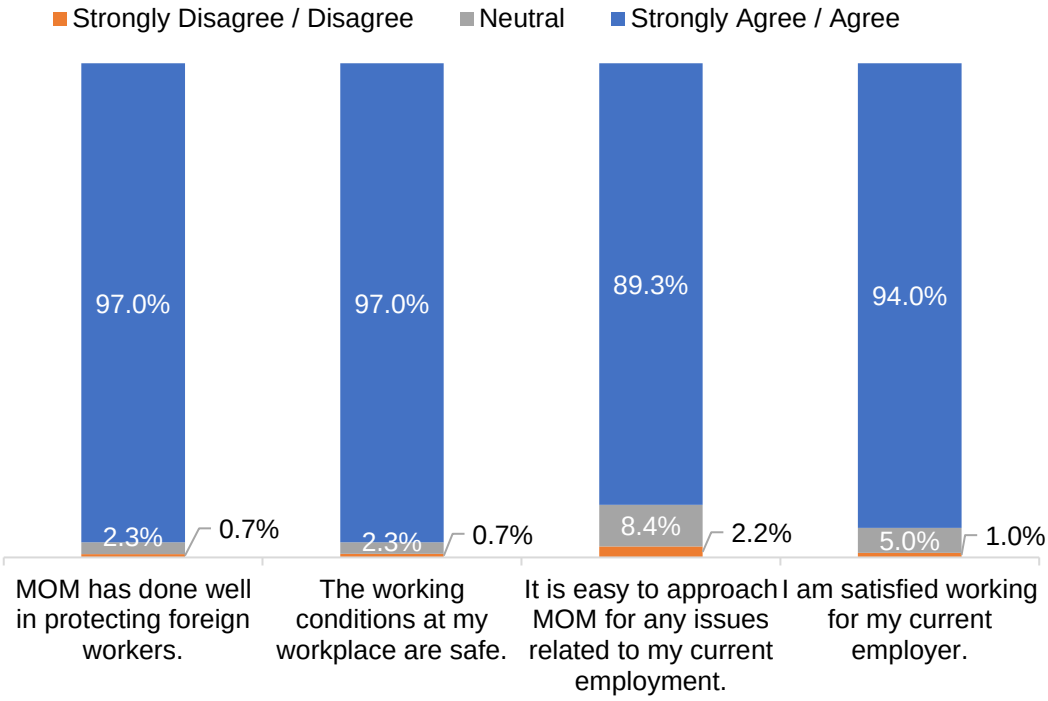


6 Perception of MOM and Workplace Conditions

6.1.1 In 2024, majority of migrant workers indicated that (i) MOM was effective in protecting foreign workers (97.0%, up from 87.0% in 2018); (ii) their working conditions were safe (97.0%, up from 87.1%); and (iii) it was easy to approach MOM for employment-related issues (89.3%, up from 82.8%).

6.1.2 94.0% of migrant workers also expressed satisfaction working for their current employers (Chart 13).

Chart 13: Migrant Workers' Perception of MOM and Their Workplaces, 2024

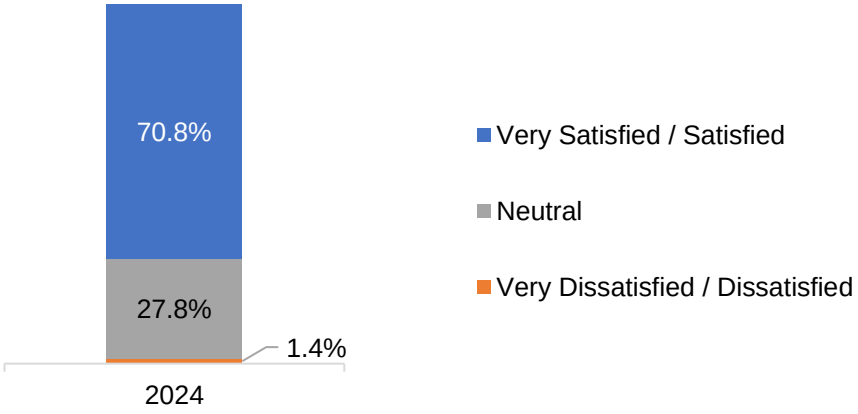


7 Overall Satisfaction and Retention Levels

7.1 Satisfaction with quality of migrant workers

7.1.1 Majority (70.8%) of employers reported being satisfied with the quality of their migrant workers, suggesting generally positive sentiments toward the workers (Chart 14).

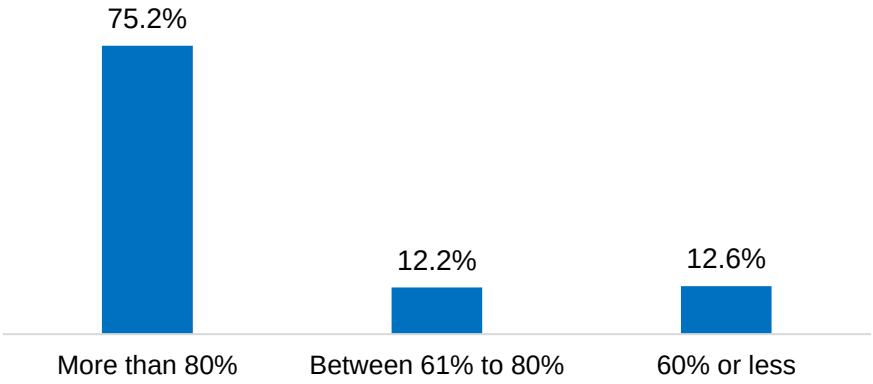
Chart 14: Employers' Satisfaction with Quality of Their Migrant Workers



7.2 Retention of migrant workers

7.2.1 3 in 4 employers reported that they retained more than 80% of their migrant workers through the renewal of their Work Permit contracts (Chart 15). This points to a stable employment relationship.

Chart 15: Proportion of Employers by Average Retention Rate of Their Migrant Workers

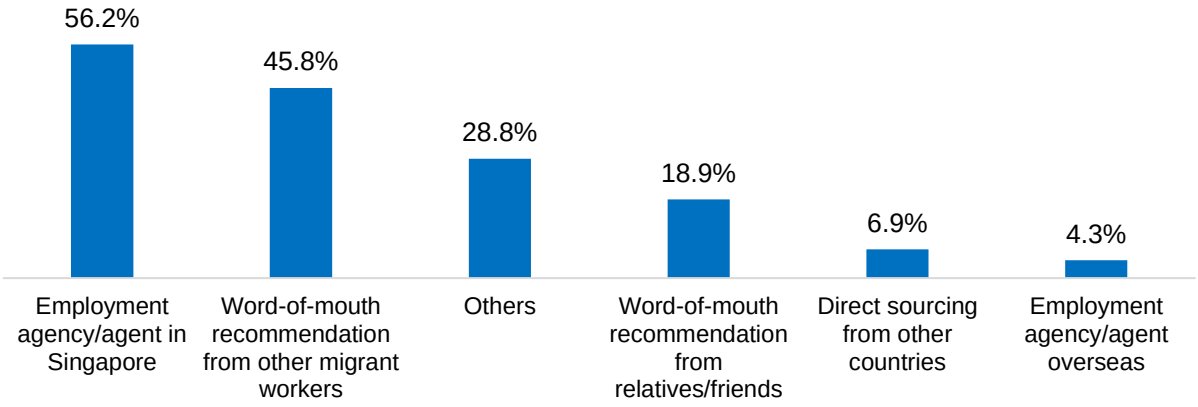


8 Recruitment Experience

8.1 Channels of sourcing for migrant workers

8.1.1 Employment agencies or agents in Singapore were the most common channel used by employers to recruit migrant workers, with 56.2% of employers engaging their services. 45.8% followed word-of-mouth recommendations from other migrant workers. Among the 28.8% of employers who indicated "Others", most identified online job portals as a recruitment method used (Chart 16).

Chart 16: Employers' Use of Channels to Recruit Migrant Workers



8.2 Services employers engaged employment agents for

8.2.1 For employers who had engaged overseas employment agencies or agents, 95.4% utilised these agencies/agents for sourcing prospective workers. Other common services employers use overseas agencies/agents for include skills testing of workers and arrangement of workers' transportation (Table 2).

Table 2: Services that Employers Engaged Overseas-based Employment Agencies/Agents For, 2024

	2024
Sourcing of migrant workers	95.4%
Conducting/arranging interviews of migrant workers	48.5%
Application of work permits (including pre-departure arrangements)	28.8%
Skills testing of migrant workers	27.0%
Arranging transport for migrant workers	10.2%

9 Retention Benefits

9.1.1 Employers were proactive in retaining workers, with nearly 9 in 10 employers (88.8%) reporting that they would offer benefits to encourage migrant workers to continue working for the firm.

9.1.2 Salary increment (81.7%) was the most common benefit that employers would offer to encourage retention, followed by promotion opportunities (37.5%) (Table 3).

Table 3: Types of Retention Benefits Employers Would Offer, 2024

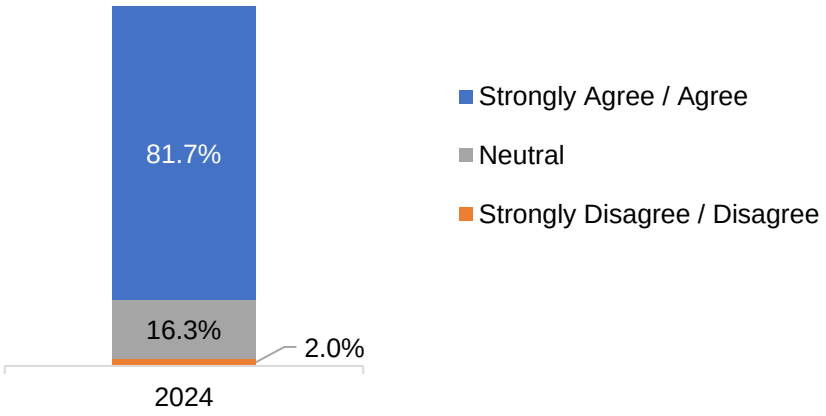
	2024
Salary increment	81.7%
Promotion opportunities	37.5%
One-time contract-extension bonus	9.6%
Additional paid work opportunities	7.0%
Additional monthly rest days	5.5%

10 Medical Insurance and Training

10.1 Medical insurance coverage

10.1.1 Majority (81.7%) of employers agreed that the amount of medical insurance coverage stipulated by MOM was sufficient for their migrant workers (Chart 17).

Chart 17: Employers' Views on Adequacy of Medical Insurance Coverage Stipulated by MOM for Migrant Workers



10.2 Provision of additional training[6]

10.2.1 Majority (80.6%) of employers reported providing additional training for their migrant workers beyond mandatory training requirements. This demonstrates employers' commitment to maintaining a skilled migrant workforce.

10.2.2 Job-specific core competencies, offered by 68.8% of employers, were the most common type of additional training provided. This was followed by safety and first-aid courses, which were provided by 39.6% of employers (Table 4).

Table 4: Types of Additional Training Provided by Employers, 2024

	2024
Job-specific core competencies	68.8%
Safety, first-aid courses	39.6%
Upskilling courses required to attain R1 status	12.7%
Supervisory/Leadership courses	12.7%
ISO, quality, standards-related courses	12.1%

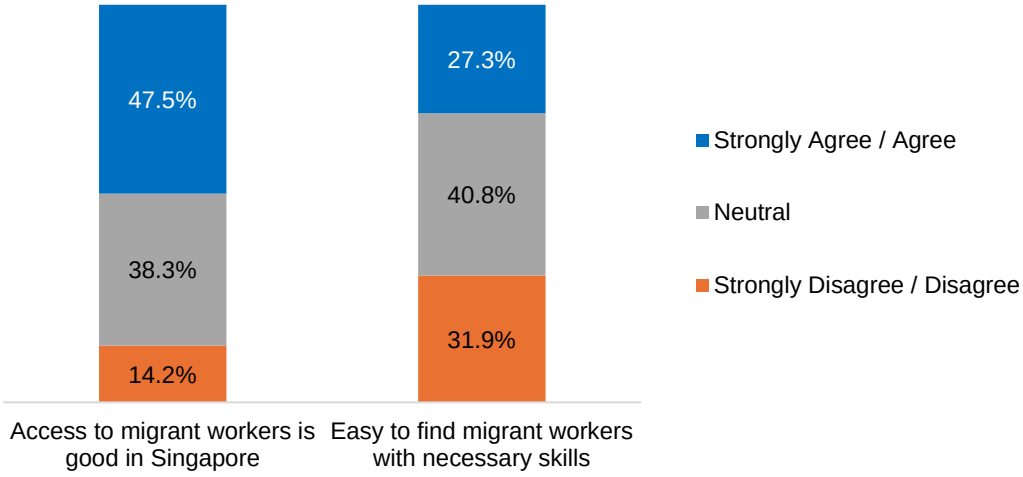
[6] Additional training refers to training over and above those required by the sector (e.g., compulsory safety courses in the Construction sector) or mandatory to perform a job role (e.g., food safety course for food handler).

11 Perceptions on Access and Skills of Migrant Workers

11.1 Access and skills of migrant workers

11.1.1 While nearly half (47.5%) of employers agreed that access to migrant workers in Singapore was good, only 27.3% of employers found it easy to find migrant workers with the relevant skills (Chart 18). This suggests there is room for improvement to enable employers to hire higher-skilled workers, particularly in more specialised roles.

Chart 18: Employers' Perception on Access and Skills of Migrant Workers



Annex

SURVEY COVERAGE & METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The *Migrant Worker Experience and Employer Survey 2024* was conducted by the Manpower Research and Statistics Department of the Ministry of Manpower under the Statistics Act 1973 (2020 Revised Edition). The survey was conducted in 2024 to both migrant workers and employers of migrant workers.

Objective

The survey was conducted to collect comprehensive information on the experience of migrant workers in Singapore, and employers' perspectives on hiring and managing their migrant workforce.

Coverage

The survey on migrant workers covered a total of 3,020 migrant workers who hold non-domestic work permits, of whom 2,825 or 89.1% responded to the survey.

The survey on employers covered a total of 2,580 firms employing migrant workers, of which 2,212 firms or 85.7% responded to the survey.

Methodology

The survey on migrant workers was a self-administered survey in English or the native language of the respondent. In cases where the respondent requested for assistance to understand the question, the interviewers explained the questions to the respondent.

For the survey on employers, respondents submitted their returns online, by post or by email, with clarifications made either over the phone or via email.

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1. How would you rate this report in terms of:

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
a) Relevance to your work	☐	☐	☐	☐
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c) Ease of understanding	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. Which area(s) of the report do you find most useful? Please provide reasons.

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☐ Too detailed ☐ Just right ☐ Too brief

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
4. Overall, how would you rate this report?	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. What additional information (if any) would you like us to include in our future issues?

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