

ABSTRACT

The migration of the educated and skilled employees to developed countries which is known as Brain Drain is one of the major issues distressing the industries driven by knowledge workers in the developing countries. Although the brain drain represents an excessively large component in the total international human migrations at present, the literature on the antecedents of brain drain is still emerging and consideration on the organizational-level factors as antecedents of brain drain is seldom explored. Since this had not gained sufficient attention in the organizational/ management literature, the managers were not provided with sufficient knowledge to manage this issue. Thus, the aim of this paper is to contribute to the existing knowledge in the field of brain drain, by exploring the organizational-level factors which may lead to the migration intentions of skilled professionals. Further, the researcher encountered with a limitation in measuring the migration intention as a widely accepted measurement scale to measure this construct was not found in the existing literature. Accordingly the objectives of this study were; firstly developing a valid and reliable scale to measure the migration intention and secondly identifying the organizational-level factors affecting the brain drain and identifying the relationships between those organizational-level factors and the migration intention. This study attempted to achieve this purpose by specifically referring to the educated and skilled professionals in the IT industry in Sri Lanka.

Consequently, based on the in-depth literature survey, the constructs such as career growth, workload, incentives and perceptions of organizational politics were identified as the organizational-level factors that could affect the migration intentions. The relationships between these constructs were established based on several previous works such as the 'BD Predictors Model' by Rosenblatt and Sheaffer, the Perceptions of Organizational Politics Theory, the Herzburgs' 'Two Factor Theory' and the four dimensional 'Structure of Career Growth' by Weng and Hu. Accordingly it was hypothesized that the career growth and incentives are negatively related with the migration intentions and the workload is positively related with migration intention while the perceptions of organizational politics interact with the career growth and incentives and moderate their direct negative relationships with the migration intentions.

The empirical study was undertaken in two phases. In the first phase, the migration intention scale development was undertaken and a nine-item scale was finalized to

measure the migration intention as a unidimensional construct. Then in the second study, a survey was conducted among 300 IT professionals in Sri Lanka and among them 260 usable responses was used to test the research hypotheses. Subsequently, the data was analysed following the two-step process recommended in the literature, using AMOS 20.0 software.

The data analysis revealed that both career growth and incentives have a negative relationship with the migration intention while the workload did not show a statistically significant relationship with the migration intention. In addition, there was a positive relationship between the perceptions of organizational politics and migration intention. Further it was found that the perceptions of organizational politics interact with career growth and incentives so that even though the employees' migration intention should be low when the career growth and incentives are high, the migration intention persisted high when they perceive political influence in the organization.

The research contributed to the existing literature on brain drain by providing more rigorous theoretical explanation and providing empirical support to the organizational-level factors (career growth, workload and incentives) that already identified in the existing literature. Further this research extended the existing theoretical literature by introducing the perceptions of organizational politics as another brain drain predictor and by explaining how the perceptions of organizational politics interact with other organizational-level factors to influence the brain drain. In addition, the conceptualization of migration intention as a construct that can be used to measure the brain drain and the development of the scale to measure this construct were significant theoretical and research implications of this research.

Finally the research findings brought out valuable managerial and industrial implications specifically regarding the Human Resources Management practices that could support to control and prevent the migration of the educated and skilled employees. Such implications highlighted the importance of having employee career development mechanisms and competitive incentive schemes in the organizations; as well as ensuring the fairness of such mechanisms by preventing organizational-level political influences. The research concluded by mentioning the directions for future research; for example testing this theoretical model in different contexts and extending this theory by introducing new organizational-level factors.