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Factors Affecting the Migration Intentions of Business Students of Pakistan: Evidence from District Peshawar

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Abstract

This study is conducted to analyze the personal, internal and external factors affecting intention to migrate. Public sector universities and degree awarding institutions of Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhuwa were selected. The data was collected from 220 business students of these organizations through self administered questionnaire. The Research paper is unique in its nature be conducting research on migration intentions of business students of Khyber Pakhtunkhuwa. The results show that all the internal factors, i.e. the home country push factors and the academic pull factors from abroad, affect the migration intentions of the business students. Personal factors also affect migration intensions. Female student are least intended to go abroad as compared to male students. Young age students are more interested in shifting abroad as compared to older age students. The research has practical implications as for as policy making for evaluating student migration intentions

Key Words: *Migration Intentions, Brain Drain, Business Students.*

Introduction

Students' migration phenomenon is an international issue of concern, widely investigated by researchers (Güngör, & Tansel, 2011; Oman, Moulds & Kim, 2009; Kizito et al, 2015; Wouliji, Carter, Bates, 2009). About 4.5 million international students are studying in OECD countries (Education indicators in focus, 5th July 2013). The ratio of international students in US has been increased 10 % since 2003- 2014 and reached to 974,926 (Institute of International Education, 2013). These students are usually perusing their tertiary education as they migrated or intended to migrate in their final years of studies (Deresa & Azazh, 2012). Such outflow of students is negatively affecting their home countries in terms of cost of investment on their education and loss of potential human capital (Stark, 2004). Push and Pull factors are considered to be a vital reason forcing the students to migrate

(Docquier & Rapoport, 2012). Nonetheless, these factors cannot be considered as a sole reason for their departure as professional development should also be taken into account.

In the words of Wuliji, Carter & Bates (2009),*"Research and policy debates on the migration of health professionals tend to center on "push-pull" theories, supportive of main stream oversimplification of a complex phenomenon"*. Some researchers argued that better economic opportunities, higher education and additional training in their fields are the influencing factors (Eliason, Tuoyire, Awusi-Nti and Bockarie, 2014; Lee & Moon, 2013). Pakistani students are also migrated to technologically advanced countries every year (Imran, Azeem, Haider, Amjad, Bhatti, 2011). According to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report 4.5 million international students are studying in OECD member countries. Out of those students, 53% belong to Asia (Education indicators in focus,5th July 2013). These students migrated abroad for further higher education and better economic opportunities. Researchers have found that low quality of education in Pakistan is a prime reason for their migration (Bashir, Xu, Zaman & Akhmat, 2014). Their findings can be supported by the annual education budget of Pakistan which is 2.5% of the GDP (World Bank, 2013; CIA Fact File, 2013; Economic Survey of Pakistan, 2013). The studies conducted on Pakistani students have mainly focused on the medical students (Imran et al., 2011; Bashir et al., 2014). However, no comprehensive study has been conducted on Pakistani students of Business and Management which belong to an important filed of education with high employability. In USA the number of international students in the field of Business and Management are the largest proportion of all disciplines making 20% of all students followed by Engineering, Math and Computer Science, Social Sciences and Physical and Life Sciences (International students in the US, 2015). Similarly, every year about 300 students are migrating to Australia and majority of them comprise of engineering and business students. In the year 2015 the toll reached to 500 students (Tribune, 31st August 2015). Hence, the purpose of the research study is to identify the factors affecting the migration intentions of Business and Management students' of Pakistan.

Literature Review

With the advent of Globalization where labour and capital can be easily transferred across the world, the transnational mobility of students has been rapidly increased (Pungas, Täht, Realo & Tammaru, 2015). Students' migration to advanced countries is associated with a set of push and pull factors such as better economic opportunities, living conditions, advance training and research facilities (Sheikh, Naqvi, Sheikh, Naqvi & Bandukda 2012). Researchers analyzed the mobility of international students in the perspective of neoclassical theory. Pimpa (2005) argued that family, peers and agents had a vital role in their decisions to migrate abroad. He found that students' decision making process to migrate abroad was not a single stage process but involved several stages. However, was unable to describe the impact of academic/ university related information. Marital status was also considered to be decisive factor for students' retention in a host country (Kim, 2015). It implies that unmarried students have lager tendency to migrate as compared to married ones. The literature on students' cross national mobility is agreed that Push and Pull factors in home and host countries respectively greatly influence the students' migration (Oman, Moulds & Usher, 2009). However, Chen (2007) took the push and pull model to one step further by introducing four set of push and pull factors linked with *(i) Academic, (ii) Administrative, (iii)Environment and (iv)significant other.* She maintained that those factors were imperative for students' migration intentions. A close analysis of Chen's model (2007) reveals that only traditional socio, economic push and pull factors (Lee, 1966) can not sufficiently explain the student's return intentions because migration intention for students and nonstudents are strikingly different. However, students' intend to migrate abroad due to academic pull factors. In a study conducted on the students reducing regional disparities and economic situational differences were considered as source for students migration intentions (He, Zhai Asami & Tsuchida, 2016). Research shows that attractive work place environment is a factor for preventing the medical brain drain (Horváth, Terebessy, Voigt, Riemenschneider, Balogh, Faubl, . . . Bergmann, 2017)

Our study argues, focusing on Chen (2007) model, that students migration intention to study abroad is affected by push factors, existing in home countries and academic pull factors operating in host countries. Push factors are consisted of economic, social and political factors (Labonté et al., 2015; Sheikh et al., 2012) while academic pull factors are university reputation and quality of education etc which were described by Chen (2007) as, "….. *the academic pulling factors were ranked with very high importance…. In general, the university reputation/quality/ranking was ranked ahead of the program reputation/quality/ranking (p.283)"*. Similarly, Li and Bray (2007) also found that academic pull factors attracted the students to host country.

Theoretical Framework and Variables

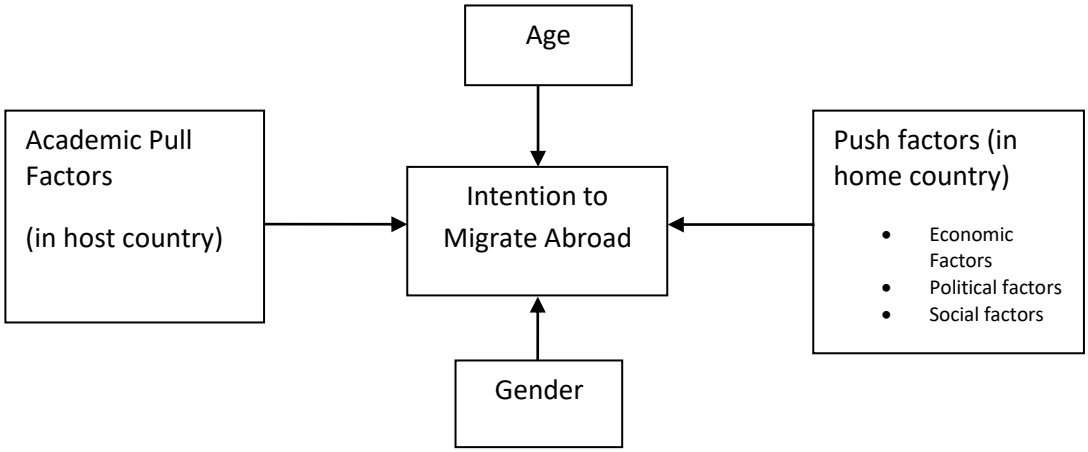

Figure. 1 . Theoretical frame work derived from the literature

Gender and migration Intention

Age and intention to migrate have a significant relationship. Young students being ambitious are more inclined to migrate abroad as compared to older ones (Deresa & Azazah, 2012; Kizito et al. 2015)

Academic Pull factors and intention to migrate:

Academic pull factors including quality of education, university environment, professors etc greatly impact the decisions of students to study abroad (Chen, 2007)

Push Factors and Student intention to migrate:

Push factors play a vital role in students' intention for migrating abroad. Socio economic and political factors pushing a student to leave his/her home country (Labonté et al.2015; Sheikh et al.2012)

Gender and Student intention to migrate:

Gender and migration intention have a significant relationship (Tharenou, P, 2010; Wuluji). Females as compared to males have less inclination to migrate as compared due to socio- cultural factors (Carter & Bates, 2009).

Methodology

Data and data Collection

The data was collected from the final year students studied in four leading public sector universities and one Degree Awarding Institute of district Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhuwa. The data was collected through a close ended five point Likert scale. The questionnaire was adopted from (Chen, 2007), however, modified according to the cultural understanding of Pakistan by dropping some items. A pilot testing was undertaken prior to questionnaire distribution.

Population

Four leading public sector universities and one degree awarding institute of district Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhuwa are selected as sample. The reason for the selection of these universities and Degree Awarding Institute was that these institutions had the departments of Management Sciences having Business and Management students. The reason for selecting public sector universities/DEIs was their admission criteria as quotas were allotted to all regions of the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhuwa, hence, that helped the researcher to get a true sample of the whole province to the maximum extent.

Sample size and sampling technique

A total of 250 self administered pretested questionnaires were randomly distributed among the final year students through volunteer students coordinators as "enumerators" in each university/DAI. However, 220 questionnaires were returned and found correct. The total response rate was 88%. The students were aware of the objectives of the study through enumerators and their consent was also taken for participating in the survey.

Data analytical technique

Descriptive statistics were applied on the data by using SPSS 2.0 version.

Results and Discussion

Table below shows the descriptive statistics of the personal factors of the students;

Table I: Descriptive Statistics of Personal factors

Indicator	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
Age	1	2	1.26	.438	1.127	.192	-.739	.381
Gender	1	2	1.29	.457	.914	.192	-1.179	.381
Income	1	6	2.95	1.622	.544	.194	-.900	.386
Duration stay	1	3	2.02	.667	-.022	.194	-.723	.386

Source: Survey Results, 2016

The personal factors include the age of the person who is intending to migrate, the gender, the income of the family, and the duration for which the respondent will stay abroad. The mean value of the age is 1.26 which

means that young people are very keen to go abroad. As they get older and older their interest decreases or almost vanishes. The same was found by Deresa & Azazah, 2012 and Kizito et al. 2015. Male respondents are more interested in moving abroad as compare to female. This endorses the results of Tharenou (2010) and Wuluji, Carter & Bates (2009). Income of the family does not matter a lot to measure the migration intention of the respondent. The average value of the duration of the stay is 2.02 which shows the respondents are willing to go for longer period of time abroad not for shorter period. This shows students' intentions for getting higher education which takes longer time to stay.

Table 2 provides the descriptive statistics of the academic pull factors.

Table .2: Descriptive Statistics of Academic pull factors

Indicator	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewnes	Kurtosis
Advanced degree for personal satisfaction	1	5	3.45	1.429	-.332	-1.211
Foreign language skills	1	5	3.42	1.260	-.359	-.941
Foreign advanced degrees improve job prospects	1	5	3.42	1.386	-.458	-1.038
My profession requires an advanced degree	1	5	3.45	1.379	-.476	-1.043
The opportunity to experience a Western culture	1	5	3.35	1.418	-.398	-1.140
The work experience abroad is valued by my home country	1	1	3.33	1.478	.634	3.159
I value an advanced degree from a Western country	1	5	3.15	1.271	-.198	-.825
The foreign degrees are prestigious	1	5	3.05	1.386	-.108	-1.177
Prospects of better employment and higher salary	1	3	3.12	2.746	8.375	91.064
Family/Spouse	1	5	3.04	1.321	-.151	-1.024
Other Students/Friends	1	5	3.03	1.290	-.012	-1.040
Home country lacks research facilities	1	5	2.92	1.191	.116	-.721
Professors	1	5	2.97	1.196	.164	-.868
Desired education not available	1	5	2.79	1.231	.127	-.997
Limited career prospects at home	1	5	2.75	1.253	.126	-1.079
Uncertain political situation	1	5	3.03	1.161	.062	-.747
The opportunity to gain freedom from family	1	5	2.69	1.230	.230	-.864
Sponsor	1	5	3.04	1.377	-.145	-1.266
Financial support from home government or agency	1	5	2.76	1.327	.189	-1.114
Employers	1	5	2.81	1.170	.259	-.685

Source: Survey Results 2016

The list of the academic pull factors is very vast and includes so many variables. However, this study has intended to take the most important factors which affect the migration intention of the business students. The results show that all those factors whose average value is above 3 are considered the most important factor affecting the

migration intention. For example these includes Advanced degree for personal satisfaction, Sponsor, Uncertain political situation, Foreign language skills, foreign advance degree etc. are having high mean value which means the respondents are considering these factors as important factors. Other factors like Home country lacks research facilities, Professors, limited career prospects at home country, employers, and financial support from home country government etc. are those factors which the respondents are considering least important for migration intensions.

Table.3 below provides the descriptive statistics of the push factors affecting migration intension of the business students

Table. 3: Descriptive Statistics of Push factors

Indicator	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Family/ spouse	1	5	3.46	1.049	-.389	.068
working environment	1	5	3.42	.880	-.424	-.323
Low/ poor living standard	1	5	3.62	.918	-.745	.451
Lack of cultural adjustment	1	5	3.56	1.067	-.556	-.250
Ethnic problem	1	5	3.45	1.256	-.328	-.935
Poverty	1	5	3.28	1.135	-.145	-.502
Lack of income and employment opportunities	1	5	3.29	1.286	-.347	-.873
Inflation	1	5	3.54	1.149	-.599	-.337
Cost of living is high	1	5	3.51	1.194	-.626	-.483
Political instability in the country	1	5	3.33	1.109	-.577	-.083
Worsen Law and order situation	1	5	3.33	1.121	-.466	-.311
Terrorism	1	5	3.38	1.365	-.340	-1.060
Lack of safety	1	5	3.40	1.303	-.365	-.988
High crime	1	5	3.31	1.357	-.340	-1.117
Valid N (listwise)						

Source: Survey Results 2016

The push factors taken in this study are given in the table above in the first column. These include family or spouse, working environment, poor living standards, lack of cultural adjustment, ethnic problem, poverty etc. the list is too long but the most important indicators are taken in this study. If we look at the mean values of all these indicators, it is greater than 3. This means that all these factors affect the migration intension of the students. High crime ratio, terrorism, worst law and order conditions are all those factors which affect the migration intensions of the business students. The respondents do not feel that future will be safe here in the country and that's why they want to migrate abroad.

The results of all the factors show that according to the business students of the public sector universities in Peshawar, the push factors are the leading factors in diverting the migration intensions of the business sector, followed by the pull factors and personal factors. It is the economic, social and political conditions of the home country which determine the migration intentions of the business students.

Recommendations

Based on the results the study has following recommendations which if followed can help to reverse the flow of business students. The results show that all the internal factors, i.e. the home country push factors are the most important indicators affecting the migration intensions of the business students. The economic, political, ethnic and social conditions of the home country affect the migration intentions. For example worst law and order, crime rates, terrorism; political problems are the most important indicators affecting migration intension. At the same time migration intensions are also affected by the academic pull factors from abroad. Hence, a multi pronged strategy should be devised by the government with the collaboration of academic institutions. Government efforts to weed out the terrorism across the country should be taken to its logical end. Besides, quality of education institutions should also be improved by allocating more funds to the higher education. Besides, international collaborations among the leading universities of the world need to be enhanced to provide standard education in home country.

Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to identify the factors influencing the migration intention of business students to abroad. Two main factors (i) academic pull factor and (ii) the push factors were identified as the forces that affect the migration intention of the students. Like all studies, this study is also not free from limitations. The sample size, the area selection, and the number of educational institutions are all the limitations of this study. Future researches can be carried out in a very large scale by extending the sample size, by taking a larger research area and by including all types of students in these universities. District-wise or province wise comparison can be made to analyze the factors affecting migration intensions. This study is descriptive in nature. More empirical studies can be carried by utilizing binary logistic models and multinomial logistic models.

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