The Push and Pull Factors Affecting the Migration of Mongolians to the Republic of South Korea

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Abstract. Migration, which is a rational labour issue within society, has become a hot topic globally. In recent years there has been an increase in labour migration due to globalization, disparities in the development levels of countries, culture and environment, social instability, political regimes and war. The objective of the presented study was to research the push & pull factors affecting the migration of Mongolians to the Republic of South Korea. The survey was conducted among 498 Mongolians living and working in the Jeollanamedu and Jeollabugdu districts of the metropolitan cities of Incheon and Ulsan, as well as in the capital city Seoul. Numerous statistical techniques were applied to test the reliability and validity of the data, as well as factor analysis to confirm that the concepts of each variable were correctly measured, correlation analysis to assess the strength of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, and multiple regression analysis to predict the value of variables used in the study. The results of the study showed that the major push factor was an economic one, for which the main motives for migration were low or instable income, the economic downturn and poverty. Likewise, the pull factors were also economic, whereby the motivation to migrate to South Korea was driven by high wages, wellbeing, the opportunity to save and/ or social factors, such as access to quality education, the cultural experience and joining family members who had already settled in the country.

Keywords: Migration; pull factor; push factor; employee turnover

1 Introduction

Globalization has changed people’s perception of the world. An increase in access to information through social media and other means of mass communication has contributed dramatically to changing people’s perceptions about lifestyles and wellbeing, thereby increasing their awareness of the disparities and disadvantages of living in poor countries, which in turn has led to a change in their aspirations, hopes and dreams.

These changes often make people consider emigration in pursuit of security and wellbeing. Younger generations in particular are keener on the migration option because of the opportunities it presents to prevent the daily struggle at home. Wage discrepancies between countries is a key reason for international labour migration, as is the desire among students with a view to enrolling in tertiary education institutions in developed countries for a shorter or longer period of time [1].

Economic conditions serve as a push factor for developing countries and as a pull factor for industrialized countries.

Despite the social and economic stability achieved in Mongolia in recent years, the income of its citizens still remains low. Limited job opportunities has exacerbated the situation and led to an increase in migration from rural areas to urban ones, as have the country’s continuing socio-economic problems, which has resulted in an increase in official and unofficial migration to foreign countries [2]. Migration has had an important economic impact on Mongolia in terms of human resource turnover [3].

The objective of the study: The current study aims to determine the push and pull factors affecting the migration of Mongolians to the Republic of South Korea.

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2 Methodology

Migration is the movement of people from one geographical location to another, or from one administrative territory to another, or leaving the homeland permanently or temporarily for an overseas country or territory.

The chance of estimating the level of migration using a universal method are slight. As a result, researchers have developed estimation criteria that reflect the history, traditions and geographical location of the country.

Crossing territorial boundaries from one place to another is referred to as out-migration. The movement within a country, i.e. moving home to another area, is referred to as in-migration. In contrast, the movement from one country to another to access job opportunities or for socio-economic reasons is referred as emigration.

Despite economic factors, migration as a phenomenon is closely associated with politics, culture, environment, health, education and transportation.

Osaki and Safrida state that migration in industrialized societies is created due to labour demand and the people involved do so voluntarily or as a result of certain circumstances [4, 5]. According to the latest concepts, the requirements of the labour market is considered the main factor for migration, whereby the push factors of the home land and the pull factors of the destination [6] country play a crucial role. The extensive use of pull and push factors has been evidenced frequently through research, whereby various theories are used to explain migration.

2.1 Theories on push and pull factors of migration

Push and pull factor theory is widely used in migration research and was introduced by Ernst Ravenstein. In his work “Laws of Migration”, he explained the theory of step migration [6], whereby migration occurs gradually and step by step geographically. Subsequent researchers have used the theory in their works to explain patterns of geographical migration, be it within the homeland or to a host country.

Researchers have identified the factors of migration that push people to move away from their homeland, and likewise the pull factors, including the positive aspects of different geographical areas which may encourage people to be attracted to other locations and seek opportunities elsewhere.

Both push and pull factors must be present for migration to occur [7]. According to the concept of push and pull factors, push factors are those life situations in one’s present homeland that generate dissatisfaction, such as poverty, unemployment, rapid population growth, political repression, low social status. In contrast, the pull factors that make migration appealing are well-being, job opportunities, political freedom, education and the welfare system of destination country [8]. Understanding the migration factors helps identify patterns of migration.

The ‘push-pull’ theory considers population movement to be the result of two forces acting in different directions. One is the power to promote population movements, whereas the other is the power of impeding population flows. On the whole, ‘push’ power tends to be more dominant compared to ‘pull’ power [9].

Lee concludes that migration is a clever decision for those who move to other destination countries to benefit from the opportunities that are not sufficient in their homeland, but that these opportunities are closely related to demographics and economic factors [10].

According to Lee’s theory, unemployment, poverty, low wages and human rights issues in the homeland are push factors, while appealing conditions in the host country like high life expectancy, economic stability, low birth rate and the availability of 3D jobs are pull factors.

The stimuli for migration can be categorized as follows:

1. Factors relating to the homeland;
2. Factors relating to the host country;
3. External challenges; and
4. Personal characteristics.

Abella adds that significant changes in the demographics in developing and developed countries leads to migration [11]. Developed countries have ageing populations are decreasing birth rates. Developed countries therefore seek to attract people from developing countries to fill job vacancies and maintain productivity. Within this context, the growing need for caregivers and nurses in a rapidly ageing society is a strong pull factor for female migrant workers to go and work overseas.

Like other researchers, Richard concludes that migration is driven both by push and pull factors [12], for which the reasons are economic, safety concerns, the environment, and social and political issues.
Push factors represent a particular challenge for a country. In general, negative conditions cause migration, such as low productivity, unemployment, unfavourable economic circumstances, natural disasters, pollution and resource depletion [13].

Another study on the push and pull factors affecting female migrant workers in Indramayu, Indonesia, concluded that economic reasons and the unemployment rate often make female employees consider the option of working abroad. Interestingly, according to the study, the successful choice of destination country does not only lead to economic benefits, but also an upgrade of the social status of the migrant workers’ household [14].

A different study on the pull factors of migration revealed that higher salaries for the same workload in destination countries also contributed to the consideration of migration [15].

Social reasons for considering migration, as the case study in Myanmar shows, are improvements in living standards for people in rural areas and access to better public services [16].

Despite the voluntary nature of migration, persecution, war, crop failure and famine, or religious conflict can be a push factor. The roots of other push factors may include racial and ethnic discrimination and violence.

Pull factors are those in the destination country that appeal to the people to leave their homeland. These factors are economic and job opportunities, higher wages, favourable conditions for work and life [13]. Other pull factors can be the attractiveness of geographical areas such as peace, warm climate, less pollution and occurrence of natural disasters, comfortable life, for example for retired people with sufficient financial resources.

According to Xiang et.al, labour migration has become increasingly popular in many parts of Asia, however the risks associated with social protection are an issue [17].

According to [18], the reasons for migration to another country fall into two categories, namely economic and non-economic, which influences the type of migration: demand-pull; supply-push; and networks (see Table 1).

Table 1. Factors encourage migration

| Type of migration | Demand - pull          | Supply - push                     | Network / other                                      |
|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Economic          | Labour recruitment     | Unemployment, underemployment or low wages | Job and wage information flows                        |
| Non-economic      | Family unification (Family members join spouse, or children with parents) | Escaping from war, conflicts                     | Communications, transportation, aid organizations and desire for new experiences/adventure |

Source: [18].

In their research, Muhammad and Yuherina gave consideration to the economic, social and cultural push factors for migration [14].

On the other hand, researchers like Van Hear, et.al reviewed existing factors affecting migration, approaching the issue from a different angle, namely migration policy within the political system based on the case of Afghan and Somali movements [19].

Parkins in her article “Push and Pull factors of Migration” identified four factors that influence migration: crime, discrimination, occupation and skills, of economic and social opportunities. In the study, in order to ensure comparability, the researcher classified the respondents into four categories: those who had not yet migrated; people considering migration; people in the process of migrating; and people who have already migrated [20].

Researchers frequently consider economic, demographic, socio-cultural, political and miscellaneous factors as the key factors affecting migration. What follows is a summary of their findings.

**Economic factors:** The majority of researchers see this as key. In contrast to the developed world, developing countries face a number of challenges - unemployment, low wages, limited job opportunity, poverty – which often serve as push factors. The majority of people moving from developing countries to industrialized ones are therefore migrants seeking economic benefits.

**Demographic factors:** These include personal characteristics, including age, gender, social origins, education level, race, family and ethnicity [21].

**Socio-cultural factors:** This concerns, for example, the younger generations desire to obtain diverse cultural experiences through studying abroad and living for a shorter or longer period in overseas countries.

**Political factors:** Political crises, military coups, discriment, lack of political freedom, social origins, political persecution often makes people consider migration as a means to survive.
Miscellaneous factors: These tend to be personal motives like institutional stability, the degree to which it is possible to disagree with the authorities of state, employment, promotion criteria, links to family and friends, and skills match [21].

Study model: Based on the literature review, the following research design was developed, including the respective hypotheses.

![Research Design](image)

**Figure 1. Research Design**

*Source: Authors.*

Hypotheses for the study:

The following hypotheses were formulated within the framework of the study:

H1: Economic factors serve as push factors for Mongolia.

H2: Socio-cultural factors serve as push factors for Mongolia.

H3: Miscellaneous factors serve as push factors for Mongolia.

H4: Economic factors serve as pull factors for the Republic of South Korea.

H5: Socio-cultural factors serve as pull factors for the Republic of South Korea.

H6: Miscellaneous factors serve as pull factors for the Republic of South Korea.

3 Results and Discussion

A questionnaire survey was conducted among Mongolians living and working in the Jeollanam’edu and Jeollabugdu districts of the metropolitan cities of Incheon and Ulsan, as well as in the capital city of South Korea, Seoul. Numerous analyses were carried out to verify the proposed hypotheses of the study, including factor analysis, reliability test, correlation and regression analysis using Smart PLS 3.0.

The survey was conducted from 15 June to 25 August 2019. Six hundred fifty questionnaires were distributed to potential respondents. In total, 498 (76.6%) filled in questionnaires were returned. The questionnaire consisted of 27 questions divided into 6 sections, with a 5 point Likert scale for each question. The demographic characteristics of the respondents was collated, including age, gender, duration of stay and residence status (see Table 2).

| Regions the participants live | Age | Gender | Duration of stay | Residence status |
|-------------------------------|-----|--------|------------------|------------------|
| Region                        |     | Gender |                  |                  |
| Ulsan                         | 16.3| Male   | 3 months         | Student          |
|                               |     |        | 9.7              |                  |
|                               | 35.4|       | 3 -6 months      | Contractual worker|
|                               |     |        | 18.0             |                  |
|                               | 15.0| Female | 6 months up to -1 year | Tourist |
|                               |     |        | 15.9             | 12.7             |
|                               | 25.1|        | 2-3 years        | Permanent resident|
|                               |     |        | 27.7             | 13.7             |
|                               | 8.2 |        | 4-6 years        | Medical treatment|
|                               |     |        | 15.0             | 0.6              |
|                               | 11.5|        | 7-10 years       | Illegal          |
|                               |     |        | 8.2              | 25.5             |
|                               | 8.2 |        | 11 and more years |                  |
|                               |     |        | 5.6              |                  |

*Source: Authors.*
The background information of the respondents reveals that 59.7% were male and 40.3% female. By age, 71.9% of the respondents were 18-35 years old, which means that the majority of the migrants living and working in the Republic of South Korea are younger people. By duration of stay, 43.5% stayed up to 1 year, 27.7% 2-3 years, 13.8% 4 and more years, and 15.0% up to 6 years.

By residence status, 27.5% were student’s, 20.0% worked under contract, 13.7% were permanent residents, and 25.5% were illegal immigrants.

3.1 Reliability analysis of the variables

A reliability test was conducted to ensure the trustworthiness of the tool. Cronbach’s α indicated 0.7 points [22], which confirms the reliability of the questionnaire for further analysis (see Table 3).

| Push factors | Factors | Number of questions | Cronbach's α |
|--------------|---------|---------------------|--------------|
| Economic factors | 5 | .861 |
| Socio-cultural factors | 3 | .844 |
| Miscellaneous factors | 2 | .909 |

| Pull factors | Factors | Number of questions | Cronbach's α |
|--------------|---------|---------------------|--------------|
| Economic factors | 4 | .892 |
| Socio-cultural factors | 4 | .701 |
| Miscellaneous factors | 2 | .926 |

| Migration | 7 | .873 |

Table 3. Reliability analysis of push and pull factor variables

Factor analysis was subsequently carried out to describe the push and pull variables in terms of other factors. To measure the internal consistency in scale items, a CR (Composite Reliability) test was performed. The results of each item presented a coefficient of 0.7 [23], which means the reliability of the construct is high. For the measurement of the amount of variance that is captured by a construct, AVE (Average Variance Extracted) was applied [23, 24].

| Economic factors | EF1-1 | Socio-cultural factors | .918 | EF1-2 | .814 | EF1-3 | .918 | EF1-4 | .814 | EF1-5 | .477 | Cronbach’s alpha | .861 | CR | .818 | .909 | AVE | .698 |
| Socio-cultural factors | SCF1-1 | | .918 | SCF1-2 | .811 | SCF1-3 | .918 | SCF2-1 | .481 | SCF2-2 | .430 | SCF2-3 | .863 | SCF2-4 | .737 | MF1-1 | .974 | .909 | .819 | .776 |
| Miscellaneous factors | MF2-1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Table 3.1 Reliability analysis of push factor variables

| Economic factors | EF2-1 | Socio-cultural factors | .866 | EF2-2 | .843 | EF2-3 | .866 | EF2-4 | .843 | EF2-5 | | Cronbach’s alpha | .892 | CR | .821 | .701 | AVE | |
| Socio-cultural factors | SCF2-1 | | .481 | SCF2-2 | .430 | SCF2-3 | .863 | SCF2-4 | .737 | SCF2-5 | | | | | | |
| Miscellaneous factors | MF2-1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Table 3.2 Reliability analysis of pull factor variables

Source: Authors.
3.2 Factor analysis

Factors analysis was carried out to identify the correlation between the push and pull factor variables. The results are summarized in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4. Correlation analysis for push factors

|       | EF1   | SCF1  | MF1    | MIG    |
|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|
| EF1   | 1     |       | 1      |        |
| SCF1  | 1     | 961** |        |        |
| MF1   | .108**| 1     |        |
| MIG   | .908**| .904**| .106** | 1      |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

Source: Authors.

Regarding the push factors, for the Mongolians living and working in the Republic of South Korea the economic factors are statistically significant \( r = .908, N = 466, p < 0.01 \), as are the socio-cultural factors \( r = .904, N = 466, p < 0.01 \), both of which played a key role in their migration to the country. However, other factors such as social instability and air pollution were less significant \( r = .106, N = 466, p < 0.22 \) for their decision to migrate.

Table 5. Correlation analysis for pull factors

|       | EF2   | SCF2  | MF2    | MIG    |
|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|
| EF2   | 1     |       |        |
| SCF2  | 1     | .717**|        |
| MF2   | .136**|        |
| MIG   | .912**| .760**| .136** |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

Source: Authors.

A statistically significant pull factor for Mongolians to migrate to the Republic of South Korea were the economic factors \( r = .912, N = 466, p < 0.01 \), and slightly less significant were socio-cultural factors \( r = .760, N = 466, p < 0.01 \). Environmental safety, favourable climate and quality of life were less significant to their migration compared to the aforementioned factors \( r = .136, N = 466, p < 0.05 \).

3.3 Regression analysis

To prove the proposed hypotheses, multifactor regression analysis was carried out for each of the factors (Tables 6 and 7).

Table 6. Multifactor regression analysis for push factors

| Model | R      | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. error of the estimate |
|-------|--------|----------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1     | .915*  | .837     | .836              | 1.5126                    |

a. Predictors: (Constant), EF1, SCF1, MF1

Source: Authors.

The results of the analysis shows that the correlation between the push factors for Mongolia and the migration of people was 83.7% (R Square=.837).
### ANOVA

| Model | Sum of squares | df | Mean square | F   | Sig. |
|-------|----------------|----|-------------|-----|------|
| Regression | 5424.259 | 3  | 1808.086 | 790.273 | .000<sup>b</sup> |
| Residual | 1057.022 | 462 | 2.288 | | |
| Total | 6481.281 | 465 | | | |

<sup>a</sup> Dependent Variable: MIG  
<sup>b</sup> Predictors: (Constant), EF1, SCF1, MF1  
*Source: Authors.*

### Coefficients

| Model | Unstandardized coefficients | Standardized coefficients | t  | Sig. |
|-------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----|------|
|       | Unstandardized coefficients | Beta                      |    |      |
|       | Std. error                  |                           |    |      |
| (Constant) | 4.009 | .693 | 5.784 | .000 |
| EF1   | .671 | .089 | .512 | 7.536 | .000 |
| SCF1  | .848 | .140 | .412 | 6.056 | .000 |
| ESF1  | .005 | .054 | .002 | .086 | .931 |

<sup>a</sup> Dependent Variable: MIG  
*Source: Authors.*

The results reveal that the main push factors for Mongolians to migrate to the Republic of South Korea are economic ($\beta = 0.512 p<0.001$) and socio-cultural ($\beta = 0.412 p<0.001$). The positive beta coefficient of the related variables and the statistical significance $p < 0.01$ means hypotheses 1 and 2 are confirmed. Poor retention rates and increased staff turnover in companies in Mongolia is partly related to the economic factors of the migration.

On the other hand, the environment and safety concerns ($\beta = 0.002 p>0.005$) were not significant for migration. Although the beta coefficient for the variables was positive, statistically it was less significant ($p>0.005$), which means that hypothesis 3 is refuted, i.e. these factors are not a push factor for Mongolians to migrate.

Table 7. Multifactor regression analysis for pull factors

### Model Summary

| Model | R  | R Square | Adjusted R square | Std. error of the estimate |
|-------|----|----------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 1     | .925<sup>a</sup> | .856 | .855 | 1.4231 |

<sup>a</sup> Predictors: (Constant), EF2, SCF2, MF2  
*Source: Authors.*

The results of the analysis shows that the correlation between the pull factors for Mongolia and the migration of people was 85.6% (R Square=.856).

### ANOVA

| Model | Sum of squares | df | Mean square | F   | Sig. |
|-------|----------------|----|-------------|-----|------|
| Regression | 5545.607 | 3  | 1848.536 | 912.736 | .000<sup>b</sup> |
| Residual | 935.675 | 462 | 2.027 | | |
| Total | 6481.281 | 465 | | | |

<sup>a</sup> Dependent Variable: MIG  
<sup>b</sup> Predictors: (Constant), EF2, SCF2, MF2  
*Source: Authors.*

### Coefficients

| Model | Unstandardized coefficients | Standardized coefficients | t  | Sig. |
|-------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----|------|
|       | Unstandardized coefficients | Beta                      |    |      |
|       | Std. error                  |                           |    |      |
| (Constant) | 3.985 | .638 | 6.244 | .000 |
| EF2   | .819 | .038 | .755 | 29.591 | .000 |
| SCF2  | .360 | .042 | .317 | 8.552 | .000 |
| MF2   | .041 | .048 | .015 | .847 | .397 |

<sup>a</sup> Dependent Variable: MIG  
*Source: Authors*
The results reveal that the main pull factors for Mongolians to migrate to the Republic of South Korea are economic ($\beta = 0.755 \ p<0.001$) and socio-cultural ($\beta = 0.317 \ p<0.001$).

The respondents noted some positive sides to living and working in the Republic of South Korea such as remittance, saving money, learning about a foreign culture and obtaining or improving professional skills.

The dependence of the related variables all presented positive (beta coefficients) and proved to be statistically significant ($p<0.01$), which means the proposed hypotheses 5 and 6 are confirmed. Conversely, the environment and safety concerns ($\beta = 0.015 \ p>0.005$) had no impact on migration. For hypothesis 6, although the beta coefficients presented positive values for the factors, they were statistically insignificant ($p>0.005$), which means it was not supported or the factors do not serve as a pull factor with regards to migration to the Republic of the South Korea.

4 Conclusion

Within the social context of migration, human resources and labour issues are at stake. In the modern world, the migration of labour is an important issue for policy makers, researchers and other stakeholders. The potential growth and development of the labour force and the optimal use thereof are essential to a country’s development. The migration of labour plays a particularly important role in supporting the growth of an economy, increasing the skills level of the labour force and meeting the labour market demands of a country. On the other hand, migration causes a number of problems for an economy and society, such as a brain drain or the loss of highly skilled technical labour [25].

Despite recent economic and social improvements in Mongolia, little has changed in terms of incomes and job opportunities. As a result, in-migration from rural to urban areas and migration to foreign countries remains high. In facing these various challenges, the younger and middle-age generations have chosen to seek higher paid jobs in foreign labour markets. The current situation is having an impact on the retention of skilled labour at the local business level. For Mongolians, the main reason to migrate to the Republic of South Korea is economic. Unemployment, unstable low incomes, the economic crisis, poverty, poor job opportunities and living standards all serve as push factors for migration.

In addition, the research results indicate that socio-cultural factors, such as a lack of accessibility to healthcare, separation from family, and family conflicts also serve as push factors. However, factors like social stability and air pollution have no effect.

According to the survey results, the pull factors for migration to the Republic of South Korea are the comparatively high wages, a comfortable livelihood, accessibility to quality healthcare, the possibility to gain a good education and the cultural experience.

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