

DETERMINANTS OF LONG - TERM MIGRATION INTENTION AMONG IT PROFESSIONALS IN CHENNAI: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION

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ABSTRACT

Human desire to improve their personal and professional life has lead to the act of migration. Globalization and Urbanization has paved way for the movement to move from their native places to migrated cities among skilled migrants. Even though they move temporarily their long - term migration intention to stay are influenced by certain factors which is important to study in the current phenomenon to increase the social status of individuals which is under explored. The present study aim to examine the factors influencing the long - term migration intention of IT professionals in Chennai city. A quantitative research approach with a descriptive research design was adopted and primary data was collected from 120 IT employees using structured questionnaire through convenience sampling technique and proposed hypothesis were tested using statistical tools such as Correlation analysis, Multiple regression analysis and Sobel test of mediation. The Statistical results indicates, Social integration and career opportunity as a strongest association ($r=0.441^{**}$) among all other associations found out through correlation analysis and regression analysis revealed that 53.8% of IT employees long - term migration intention is influenced by career opportunity, workplace inclusiveness and Family embeddedness and Sobel test results indicated a partial mediation of social integration on the long - term migration intention expect Urban Liveability ($Z=1.437$). Overall, the study contributes towards the rising literature of skilled internal migration and these insights would be useful for organizations and policymakers to develop employee retention strategies and create supportive urban environment for skilled professionals in different city.

Keywords: *Long - term migration intention, IT professionals, factors of migration, social integration, Chennai*

Introduction

Human aspiration to improve their standard of living, dignity and build a better future for their spouse have leads to the act of migration. Migration refers to the movement of people from one place to another to find better living conditions in the present competitive society has become a most important component of economic development and labour market transition across the world. Globalization and migration are interlinked together to fulfill the need for an increasing demand of skilled human capital among different sectors and economies. The rapid expansion of Information Technology (IT) sector has attracted more labour force at the knowledge based criteria to fulfill their respective goals and contribute more for the growth of an economy. In India, IT and BPM sector has become one of the strongest pillars of the economy which roughly employs 6 million people and significantly contribute towards migration patterns. Major technology hubs in India are located at cities such as Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai, Pune and Kolkata which attract more skilled professionals from different states and within state every year. Among these, Chennai is India's third- largest software exporter after Bengaluru and Hyderabad. Chennai also known as Madras is the capital city of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu which is a major commercial, cultural, economic and educational centre in South

India and ranks as one of the India top IT powerhouse and is famously known as the country's SaaS (Software as a Service) capital. The City thrives on a massive talent pool of employees for multinational companies (MNC's) and provide better Career opportunities and Quality of Life for them. While it attracts more employees it does not mean their permanent stay in the destination City. Initially, employees relocate to gain growth in their career, then their decisions are influenced by certain factors where overall satisfaction of city paves way for them to stay permanently rather than leaving the City after gaining experience. This mobility among them affect the skilled human capital retention rate, where it is important for employers, Policymakers and Organizations seeking to retain employees. The present study aims to examine on the key factors determining the long - term migration decisions among IT professionals in Chennai. By pinpointing on Career growth, Inclusive work culture, Benefits of Urban life, Financial stability, Family support and social integration as mediator the study contribute towards the rising literature on skilled migration patterns and provide insights for organizations to create strategies for reducing the turnover rate among employees and retain talent employees which develop the growth of the economy indirectly.

Review of Literature

De Mel, L.V.S.K and Priyanath, H.M.S (2025), examined the Push - Pull factors influencing migration intention among Private sector employees in the Western Province of Sri Lanka, utilizing an explanatory sequential method. By using previous studies literature - base, it focused on economic, social, Political Push and Pull factors which affect the intention of employees to migrate to other countries. A mixed methodology was used to collect data, which consist of 351 responses and qualitative data using in - depth interviews from nine purposively selected employees and it was analyzed using thematic analysis and hypothesis testing which resulted on Economic, Social and Political Pull factors have a positive significant effect on the migration intention whereas factors based on Sri Lanka's economic challenges, labour market and systematic issues are considered to be major qualitative Push Factors. The study concluded that by improving working conditions and employment opportunities in key sector can reduce the Push factors that cause skilled workers to migrate.

Thushan Dodanwala et.al (2024), investigated the cognitive processes that affect migratory tendencies in the software engineering sector in Sri Lanka, utilizing the Theory of Planned Behaviour as a conceptual framework. It focused on to determine the direct and moderating relationship among key elements such as, Attitudes, Subject Norms, Perceived Behavioural controls, Job - satisfactory and Political & Economic factors which influence on the intention to migrate among Sri Lankan software engineers. A preliminary survey was conducted which involved 21 software engineers and the data was analyzed through SEM technique and found out that, twenty seven factors were initially identified and categorized under five category and then it indicated that all variables significantly impact the intention to migrate among software engineers. The researcher concluded that retention strategies, recognition initiatives and support from government can change the perspectives of software engineers. Further research can be done in other economies which rely on software industry.

Krupanandhan and Vaishali (2024), analyzed that determinants of life satisfaction towards migration employees with special reference to Chennai City. It examined the underlying dimensions of migration employees variables focusing on financial, social, behaviour, security and performance factors. It attempted an empirical evidence from 463 migrant youth employees working in Construction sector of Chennai District and collected data was analyzed with the help of statistical techniques including factor analysis, regression analysis, test of normality and descriptive statistics. The results indicated that an employees social factor,

behavioral factor, security factor and performance factor all have an impact on their financial factor, which in turn affects their level of life satisfaction. Furthermore, the scope highlights that regulatory authorities can improve awareness on regulating income, expenditure and savings of migrant employees and increased employment opportunities would improve their standard of living in Chennai City.

Upadya Rathnayake et.al (2023), aimed to explore the factors influencing to the outflow migration of IT Professionals in Sri Lanka. It focused on economic & financial factors, macro environmental and family factors as variables identified from previous studies based on migration intention. A mixed methodology was used for collecting data from IT workers who work in ICT Companies registered under Sri Lanka economic development board, 2023 and 384 individuals were selected randomly from 146000 of total population and it was analyzed using Rotated - Component analysis for both genders. They found out connections between different factors effects on migration intention and identified variables are positively connected and concluded that certain policies could encourage long - term economic development in Sri Lanka's IT sector. Further research can focus on cross - national studies and IT workers from different backgrounds which will gain a detailed knowledge of IT professionals migration decision.

Jagatheswari and Malini (2023), aimed to focus on the factors contributing to the inflow of IT employees towards Hyderabad, the HITEC City of India. It focused on main elements such as career prospects, work - life balance, cost of living and cultural aspects that affect IT workers decisions to move to Hyderabad. The study was conducted entirely based on Primary Data collected from 100 IT employees who have been migrated from their home places to well developed cities for better future aspiration and it was analyzed using Percentage analysis and Regression analysis Technique. The result revealed that a Person's nature of migration (temporary or Permanently) is significantly influenced by their marital status. The majority of married individuals move to high developed city permanently with their family to enhance their standard of living. It was concluded by defining a combination of alluring qualities and opportunities must be strengthened in order to continue growing and succeeding hub for employment in HITEC Cities of India.

Jyotsna Haran, Raju K.Kurian and Saurabh Ojha (2020), aimed to focus on Indian migration within and outside the country by considering Profession and Professionalism as the axis of the study. The study particularly focused on the certain aspects of migration which helps for professionalism and individual development, promotes competitiveness, develops the concept of global village, secures the family happiness, promotes national integrity and cultural transmission. It adopted hybrid approach, data collected from 350 respondents and same was analyzed through Chi - square and Z-test. The results indicated that migration improves all aspects of Professional growth and promotes global village concept and better employment opportunities are major reason for migration. It suggested that if India spend 5% of GDP on innovation, it may reduce the attitude of migration within and outside the country and Future scope can be highlighted through implementing new policy framework to make home paces more attractive than migration county.

Liping Liao and Chunchao Wang (2019), investigated the effects of Urban amenities on the settlement intentions of Rural - Urban migrants in China and examine whether these effects differ across age and skill groups. Medical, educational, natural, transportation amenities and social climate are key elements in this study which attract rural - urban migrants to settle in cities. The researcher attempted an cross - sectional empirical study by collecting data from city level sources to find out the total population which is 133073 samples, in that only 85497 observations where used in regression analysis, Principal component analysis and OLS (robustness check). The result indicated that high skilled migrants are attracted towards medical amenities, young and middle aged migrants are attracted by educational amenities and higher income and lower housing

prices encourage settlement intentions largely among migrants and recommended that improving Urban amenities automatically improve the attractiveness of cities among migrants.

Bakina et.al (2019), explored to compare satisfaction with various aspects of one's personal well - being and life in the City among young people with intention to migrate or not. It focused on life satisfaction which can be measured with satisfaction of life in general and with other ten life domains and satisfaction of City life. It is an empirical study of within - country migration intention among young aged people, 136 individuals aged 16-35 who live in the city Komsomolsk - on - Amur, Russia were taken into consideration and it was analyzed by categorizing it into two groups, using Mann - Whitney U Test. The results showed that young people intending to leave the city were significantly less satisfied with life in the city, economic situation, social conditions, city administration, education opportunities, profession choice and income than those intending to stay. The study concluded that satisfaction with life in the city was a stronger predictor of migration intention than overall personal well - being.

Research Gap

Although existing literature contributed on factors influencing migration, such as employment opportunities, better future, financial stable position, peer - group life and Push - Pull theory. However, limited studies focus on the long - term migration intention of IT Professionals in Chennai as a specific geographical context. Most of the studies focused on healthcare professionals, international migrants, unskilled workers in different sectors and general migration patterns, it has given a gap to study about IT professionals and their long - term decision on stay in metropolitan cities with well - developed Information technology infrastructure company.

Objectives of the Study

- 1.To examine the determinants of migration on the long-term migration intention of IT Professionals in Chennai.
- 2.To investigate the mediating role of social integration between migration determinants and Long - term migration intention.

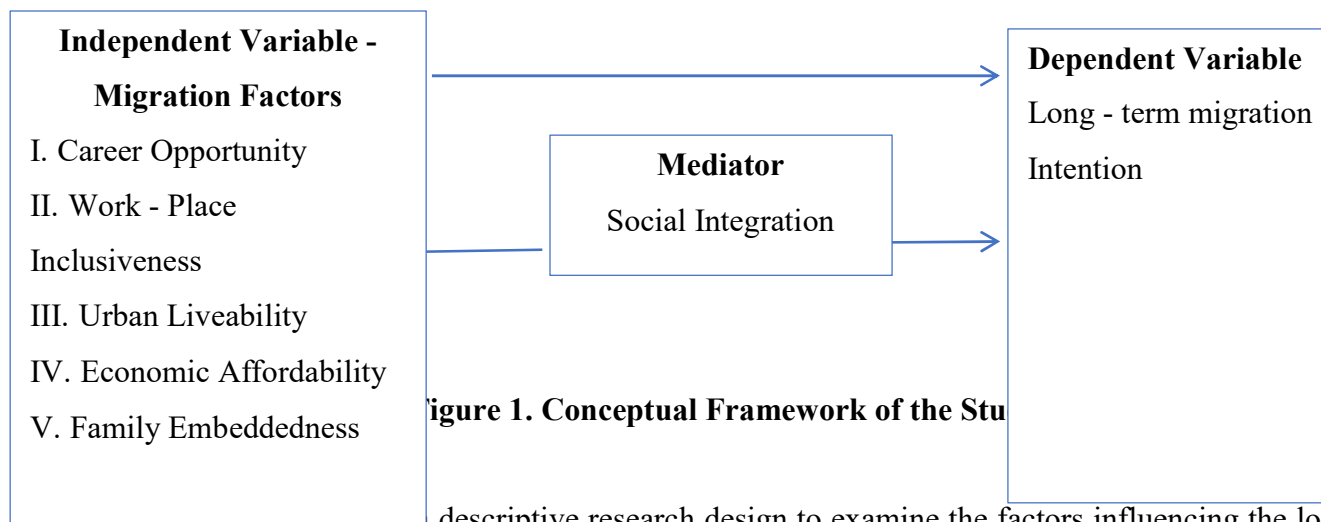


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

This study is a descriptive research design to examine the factors influencing the long - term migration intention of IT professionals who have migrated to Chennai city. A Quantitative research method was attempted to collect primary data through structured questionnaire which was distributed to IT employees

using convenience sampling technique and received 132 responses, whereas invalid responses were omitted and in which 120 valid responses were taken for analysis. The data collected was analyzed using correlation analysis, Multiple regression model, and Sobel test for mediating variable to test the proposed hypothesis.

Data Analysis and Results

(a) Descriptive Statistics

Table:1 - Descriptive characteristics

Age		
	Frequency	Percent
Below 25 years	25	20.8
26 - 35 years	65	54.3
36 - 45 years	14	11.6
Above 45 years	16	13.3
TOTAL	120	100.0
Gender		
	Frequency	Percent
Male	87	72.5
Female	33	27.5
TOTAL	120	100.0
Educational Qualification		
	Frequency	Percent
Bachelor Degree	68	56.6
Master Degree	28	23.3
Professional Degree	24	20.1
TOTAL	120	100.0

Monthly Income		
	Frequency	Percent
Rs. 25000 - Rs. 50000	23	19.3
Rs. 50001 - Rs. 75000	58	48.3
Rs. 75001 - Rs. 100000	26	21.6
Above Rs. 100000	13	10.8
TOTAL	120	100.0
Duration of Stay in Chennai		
	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1 year	18	15.1
1 - 3 years	34	28.3
4 - 6 years	59	49.1
More than 6 years	9	7.5
TOTAL	120	100.0

Interpretation: (Table:1) The descriptive characteristics of respondents indicated that IT professionals are between the age group of 26 - 35 years accounted for 54.3% of total responses in this study which revealed the

predominance of young people in IT sector. Considering the gender factor, male respondents are higher compared to female where it reflect the adaptable nature of males in the new environment for the sake of better lifestyle. Most IT professionals possessed bachelor degree and earned a moderate range of monthly income indicating relatively skilled and financial stability work labour force. Furthermore, the duration of stay in Chennai among IT Professionals are between 4 - 6 years which indicated that a large proportion of respondents are positively engaged and attracted to the work and life satisfaction in Chennai city. Overall, the descriptive statistics contribute to evaluate the relationship between migration factors and their Long - term migration intention among migrated IT employees from different states to Chennai City.

(b) Hypothesis Testing

1. H₀: No association among migration factors, Social Integration, and Long-term Migration Intention

H₁: There is an association among migration factors, Social Integration, and Long-term Migration Intention.

Table:2 - Correlation Matrix

	CO	WI	UL	EA	FE	SI	LTMI
CO	1.000						
WI	.387**	1.000					
UL	.214**	.198**	1.000				
EA	.362**	.341**	.187**	1.000			
FE	.398**	.374**	.203**	.356**	1.000		
SI	.441**	.384**	.221**	.374**	.412**	1.000	
LTMI	.468**	.411**	.214**	.398**	.437**	.531**	1.000

Interpretation: (Table:2) The correlation result reveal that all the migration factors have a significant positive associations on the long - term migration intention of IT employees in Chennai. This indicates that, the determinants of migration such as Career Opportunity, Workplace Inclusiveness, Urban Liveability, Economic Affordability, Family Embeddedness and social integration plays an vital role on the long - term migration intention among IT employees. Among these factors, Social integration and Career Opportunity exhibit a strongest positive relationships with Long - term migration intention. Overall, the result support the Alternative Hypothesis and reject Null Hypothesis on Whole.

Multiple Regression

2. H₀: No significant relationship between the factors of migration and long-term migration intention.

H₁: There is a relationship between the factors of migration and long-term migration intention.

Table:3 - Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error	F	df1	df2
1	.734	.538	.532	.459	88.269	5	379

Table:4 - ANOVA

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	92.988	5	18.598	88.269	.000
Residual	79.852	379	.211		
Total	172.840	384			

Table:5 - Coefficients (Unstandardized and Standardized)

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.748	0.204	—	3.667	.000
Career Opportunity (CO)	0.241	0.054	.248	4.463	.000
Workplace Inclusiveness (WI)	0.198	0.057	.202	3.474	.001
Urban Liveability (UL)	0.072	0.061	.071	1.180	.239
Economic Affordability (EA)	0.163	0.059	.168	2.763	.006
Family Embeddedness (FE)	0.214	0.055	.219	3.891	.000

(Dependent Variable: Long - term migration intention)

Interpretation: (Table:3) The regression analysis result shows a strong relationship between the selected determinants of Migration and Long - term Migration Intention ($R = 0.734$). The R^2 value of 0.538 indicates that 53.8% of Long - term Migration Intention of IT employees working in Chennai City is explained by Career Opportunity, Workplace Inclusiveness, Urban Liveability, Economic Affordability, Family Embeddedness and Social Integration. The Adjusted R^2 value of 0.532 confirms that the model is Valid, while the F-value of 88.269 indicates that the regression model is statistically significant. (Table:4) Considering the ANOVA results, the p-value is less than 0.01, indicating that the regression model is statistically significant. (Table:5) The coefficient result reveals, Career Opportunity ($t=4.463$), Family embeddedness ($t = 3.891$) and Workplace Inclusiveness ($t = 3.474$) have a significant positive effect on Long - Term Migration Intention, as their t-values exceed the critical value and their significance levels are below 0.05. Career Opportunity, Family embeddedness and Workplace Inclusiveness are the key determinants influencing Long - term Migration Intention among IT Employees working in Chennai City. However, Economic affordability ($t = 2.763$) and Urban Liveability ($t = 1.180$) does not have a significant effect, as its significance level is above 0.05. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is accepted, this means that the determinants of Migration have a significant relationship with Long - term Migration Intention.

Mediation Analysis – Role of Social Integration (H3, Sobel Test)

3. H₀: No mediation effect of social integration between factors of migration and long-term migration intention.

H₁: There is a mediation effect of social integration between factors of migration and long-term migration intention.

Table:6 - Path Coefficients

Path	B	SE	t-value	p-value
CO → Social Integration (Path a ₁)	0.268	0.058	4.621	.000
WI → Social Integration (Path a ₂)	0.231	0.061	3.787	.000
UL → Social Integration (Path a ₃)	0.094	0.064	1.469	.143
EA → Social Integration (Path a ₄)	0.187	0.062	3.016	.003

FE → Social Integration (Path a ₅)	0.247	0.057	4.333	.000
Social Integration → LTMI (Path b)	0.412	0.059	6.983	.000
CO → LTMI (Path c, direct)	0.241	0.054	4.463	.000
WI → LTMI (Path c, direct)	0.198	0.057	3.474	.001
UL → LTMI (Path c, direct)	0.072	0.061	1.180	.239
EA → LTMI (Path c, direct)	0.163	0.059	2.763	.006
FE → LTMI (Path c, direct)	0.214	0.055	3.891	.000

Table:7 - Sobel Test for Indirect Effects via Social Integration

Mediation Path	Path a	Path b	Indirect Effect (a×b)	Sobel Z	p-value	Mediation Type
CO → SI → LTMI	0.268	0.412	0.110	3.853	.000	Partial Mediation
WI → SI → LTMI	0.231	0.412	0.095	3.329	.001	Partial Mediation
UL → SI → LTMI	0.094	0.412	0.039	1.437	.151	No Mediation
EA → SI → LTMI	0.187	0.412	0.077	2.769	.006	Partial Mediation
FE → SI → LTMI	0.247	0.412	0.102	3.682	.000	Partial Mediation

Interpretation: (Table:6 & 7) The findings revealed that IT Employees migrants' intention to stay in Chennai long term was significantly partially mediated by Social Integration, with Sobel Z values of 2.769 to 3.853 ($p < .05$) showing that the three migration factors not only influence the intention, but also do so indirectly through enhancing the social integration. Occupational opportunity is the strongest mediated pathway ($Z = 3.853$), indicating that occupational opportunity provides social connectedness, which further supports the longer-term settlement decision. The pattern is similar for Family Embeddedness ($Z = 3.682$) and Workplace Inclusiveness ($Z = 3.329$), indicating that personal and professional social ties function as conduits for these factors to strengthen migration intention. This is followed by the mediated effect of Economic Affordability ($Z = 2.769$), which suggests that financial stability is a lesser mediator for social integration than the relational and career-related factors. But, the mediation effect of Urban Liveability on the direct effect between the variables is found to be non-significant ($Z = 1.437$, $p = .151$), which further shows that the city-level liveability conditions do not directly and indirectly influence the long-term migration intention of IT employees in Chennai.

Discussion

The results of this study indicated a positive significant relationship between migration factors and long - term migration intention of IT Professionals in Chennai City on whole and it largely supported the proposed conceptual framework and hypothesis. The Correlation analysis examined the association among migration

factors, social integration and long - term migration intention where it showed that all migration factors have significant associations on the long - term migration intention of IT employees with Career Opportunity and social integration as a strongest association. Furthermore, Multiple regression model reveals a significant relationship between selected migration determinants and long - term migration intention where 53.8% of employees long - term migration intention is influenced by Career Opportunity, Workplace Inclusiveness and Family Embeddedness. However, Economic affordability and Urban Liveability has a negative influence on the decision of migration intention of IT employees to stay in Chennai on Long - term. The mediation analysis using Sobel Test was conducted to determine whether social integration significantly carries the influence of migration factors to long - term migration intention of IT employees and it was found out that social integration partially mediated the above relationship and indicated that these migration factors not only directly influence the long - term intention but also have an indirect influence by enhancing their social integration which is sense of social support in Chennai city. Based on these insights, where career opportunity plays an important role in shaping their migration intention on long - term, MNC's in Urban area would develop strategies to enhance their occupational prospects by providing financial support programs and career advancement options to retain them in the work environment. Workplace Inclusiveness is an another factor where the employees feel the sense of belonging which directly influence their long - term migration decision, where the organizations would promote inclusive programs and recognition programs to create a good work environment which attract more workforce and lead to the achievement of organizational goals. Furthermore, family embeddedness support the decision of employees to relocate where the companies would offer work - life balance initiatives and relocation assistance which positively influence on the overall satisfaction of destination city. On the whole, the study contributes towards the literature of empirical evidence on factors influencing the long - term migration intention and offers practical implications for organizations and policymakers to retain the skilled human capital for their success of organizational goals and indirectly contribute to the sustainable urban development of Chennai City.

Conclusion

Globalization and Urbanization are two important reasons for the internal migration patterns among individuals who seek to improve their lifestyle and background of their family. Rather than temporarily moving, some individuals would move permanently in the destination city who are attracted to certain amenities and satisfied with the city environment. This study highlights the importance of understanding the factors which influence the long - term migration intention of skilled employees in IT sector to migrate from their native places to Chennai city. By identifying key determinants such as Career Opportunity, Workplace Inclusiveness and Family embeddedness it can support organization policy and help the employers to understand the need of employees and retain them by providing housing and social infrastructure for migrant IT professionals. Such initiatives can improve their quality of life and reduce talent attrition rate for companies. Overall, this study serves as an evidence for researchers, organizations and government seeking to build an inclusive cities for skilled human capital to retain them.

Scope for Future Research

Further research can extend with different population from different sectors with large sample size including other study variables like organizational support, work - life balance and quality of life influencing the intention of migrants to stay in long - term in different metropolitan cities, states or countries. Longitudinal research design can be used to examine the behaviour of same individuals over time and comparison studies can be developed across different industries or categories of skilled migrant professionals which would positively contribute to the boarder understanding of skilled migration patterns and support the development of effective work force.

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