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BRAIN DRAIN TO SINGAPORE:
A CASE STUDY OF MALAYSIAN ACCOUNTING PROFESSIONALS



Thesis Submitted to the Ghazali Shafie Graduate School of Government
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In Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
September 2016



Kolej Undang-Undang, Kerajaan dan Pengajian Antarabangsa
(College of Law, Government and International Studies)
Universiti Utara Malaysia

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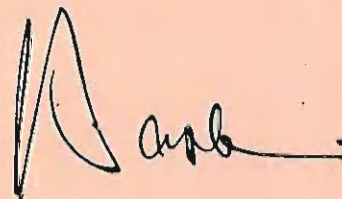
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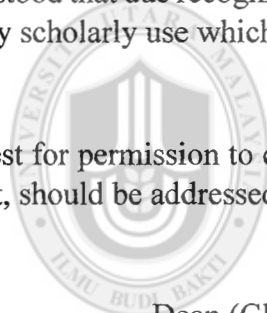


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ABSTRAK

Persaingan sengit untuk tenaga kerja mahir antara negara-negara adalah hasil tidak langsung daripada globalisasi dan ini telah membawa kepada mobiliti buruh yang pantas di seluruh dunia. Paling sering diperhatikan adalah pengaliran keluar profesional dari negara-negara membangun kepada negara-negara maju. Seringkali ini berlaku dengan membawa kesan yang buruk kepada negara-negara membangun. Malaysia merupakan salah satu negara membangun yang tidak terkecuali dari fenomena ini. Ia mendatangkan kesan negatif kepada ekonomi negara. Kajian ini didorong oleh peningkatan jumlah profesional Malaysia yang berhijrah dari negara untuk berkhidmat dinegara asing. Kajian ini menangani keperluan pakar-pakar di negara ini bagi meningkatkan ekonomi negara untuk mencapai status pendapatan tinggi menjelang 2020. Oleh itu, kajian ini mengkaji hubungan antara pembolehubah dan penghijrahan cendekiawan. Populasi kajian adalah ahli profesional perakaunan yang berpangkalan di Kuala Lumpur dan Pulau Pinang kerana ini adalah kawasan bandar utama yang menempatkan pejabat kakitangan perakaunan. Kajian ini merupakan satu kajian empirikal yang menggunakan kajian keratan rentas dan telah menggunakan kedua-dua pendekatan soal selidik dan juga temu bual bersemuka bagi tujuan meningkatkan nilai penyelidikan. Borang soal selidik telah diedarkan melalui kaedah tinggal/kutip semula, e-mel dan 'snowball' (semakin tambah). Kajian mendapati pemboleh ubah ini: Faedah yang Lebih Baik dan Manfaat, Kualiti Kehidupan Kerja, Kemudahan Prosedur Imigresen, Pendedahan Antarabangsa, Lebih Ketersediaan Pekerjaan, dan Rangkaian Sosial memberi kesan yang besar ke atas penghijrahan cendekiawan manakala Personaliti 'Big 5' dan Personaliti Proaktif menyederhanakan hubungan antara pembolehubah utama dan penghijrahan cendekiawan. Kajian ini mendedahkan bahawa selain dari wang, faktor kepuasan kerja juga harus diambil berat oleh pihak majikan kerana tanpa kepuasan kerja, pekerja akan mencari jalan keluar. Pihak kerajaan juga harus memobilisasikan pegawai mereka di luar negara untuk memastikan bahawa rakyat Malaysia di luar negara tidak terputus hubungan dengan Malaysia. Negara tuan rumah juga boleh membantu mengutip cukai bagi pihak kerajaan Malaysia. Maka ia dicadangkan bahawa Malaysia mengambil langkah proaktif supaya dapat mengawal berlakunya penghijrahan cendekiawan.

Kata kunci: Penghijrahan Cendekiawan, Profesional Perakaunan, Rangkaian Sosial, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Fierce competition for skilled labour between countries is the indirect result of globalization and this has led to intense labour mobility worldwide. Most frequently observed is the outflow of professionals from developing countries to the developed nations. More often this happens at the expense of the developing countries. Malaysia is one developing country that is not spared from this phenomenon. This is damaging to the country's economy. This research was motivated by the increasing number of Malaysian professionals fleeing the home country to serve in foreign lands. This study addresses the need of these experts in the home country to improve the nation's economy in order to achieve the high income status by 2020. Thus, the present study examined the relationship between the variables and Brain Drain. The sample population is accounting professionals based in Kuala Lumpur and Penang because these are the urban areas that contain offices where accounting personnel can be found. This research constitutes an empirical study which utilizes a cross-sectional research design. The present study has employed both the questionnaire approach and the face-to-face interviews to enhance the value of the research. Questionnaires were administered via drop off/pick up method, email and snowball. The Partial Least Squared (PLS) Method was used to analyse the data collected from the survey. The findings of the study show that Better Perks and Benefits, Quality Work Life, Ease of Immigration Procedures, International Exposure, Greater Job Availability, and Social Network have a significant impact on Brain Drain and that the Big 5 Personality and Proactive Personality moderate the relationship between the main variables and Brain Drain. This study reveals that besides money, job satisfaction should also be an area where employers should focus since without job satisfaction, people are compelled to leave. The government should also mobilise their officials abroad to ensure that Malaysians abroad are always in touch with the home country and that relationship is not severed. Host countries also could assist in collecting taxes on behalf of Malaysia. Thus it is recommended that Malaysia take proactive measures in order to curb the Brain Drain phenomenon.

Key words: Brain Drain, Accounting Professionals, Social Network, Malaysia

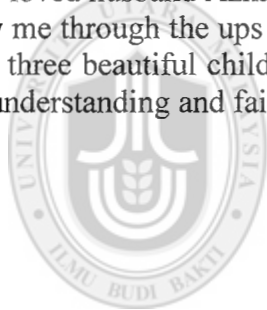
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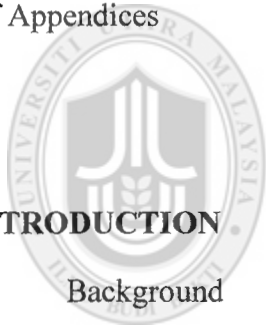
Last but not least, my deepest appreciation, never ending love and devotion to my dearly loved husband Azhar Othman, who has been the pillar of my strength standing by me through the ups and downs encouraging me incessantly, and most of all to my three beautiful children, Puteri, Megat and Rayyan, thank you so much for your understanding and faith in me.



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The increase in the movement of populaces around the globe transcending physical, national and social frontiers is the result of rapid globalization. Globalization as defined by Scholte (2005) is the process of removing international boundaries that restricts movements between countries in order to create a more open climate and borderless world economy. Hence with the removal of the state-imposed restrictions, factors of production are free to move across country borders to another. This does not exclude the free movement or migration of human capital. Movements or migration of human capital are sometimes sparked by the individual's own choices while some are induced or generated by external factors such as pressures from family, society, environment itself, etc. Among the factors which appear favourable for individuals who are seeking for better life include higher salary and better job opportunities. Not of lesser importance is the availability of the individual's own social network in the host country which plays a significant part in the movement of labour (Bornat et al. 2008). These networks may vary and include family members who have become residence, professional linkages, for instance, graduates or former students (Vertovec, 2002), business connections (Ong, 1999; Campani, 1994), religion based networking (Hiiwelmeir, 2009) etc. Social linkages and the roles they play in migrants' labour market in the host country has for some time been a topic of considerable interest (Bonacich,

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