



Role of Economic Instability, Political Instability, and Foreign Job Opportunities on Brain Drain: Perception of Business Students

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Abstract: Brain drains are a major reason for worry for migrant-sending countries. The current study will examine the impact of economic instability, political instability and foreign job opportunities on the brain drain in a developing country like Pakistan. The primary data was collected for this study through the adopted questionnaire with the help of Google Forms. The non-probability sampling strategies, i.e., convenience and snowball sampling used due to the large population of major cities in Pakistan. A total of 250 recent business graduates were requested to complete the questionnaire, and for the data analysis, Smart PLS version 3 was used. The findings of the study revealed that all three independent variables, including economic instability, political instability and foreign job opportunities, have a positive and significant impact on the brain drain of the business graduates of Pakistan. This study revealed that three key variables are important and the major cause of brain drain. The country's top management should take practical steps to address that issue in future policies and encourage the youth of Pakistan to serve the country immediately after completion of education. Our study contributes to save human capital for the betterment of nation specially in developing countries.

Introduction

In an increasingly globalized world, there has been a continual flow of highly skilled persons from poorer to wealthy countries. This phenomenon is often referred to as the “brain drain” and has been the subject of much discussion and policy debate. On the one hand, such young individuals can provide much-needed economic and human capital to their own nation, but on the other hand, home countries’ may lack access to the same resources (Dulam, 2015; Siekierski et al., 2018; Mtombeni N., & Matiza, V. M., 2022). As a result, it is important to consider both the advantages and drawbacks of this practice. It is no secret that many people migrate to more developed countries after completing of

education up to the graduate level. This move is due to the numerous benefits that business graduates can obtain in developed countries, including higher wages, improved quality of life, and an enhanced number of career opportunities (Libanova, 2019). Moreover, being in a more advanced location offers a sense of safety and comfort and fulfilment of basic needs to meet (Desmet & Fokkinga, 2020). This kind of environment allows individuals to build meaningful relationships and make valuable connections (Saxenian, 2015; Mukhtarov et al., 2022).

The issue of brain drain is an issue that has remained long under discussion primarily in

terms of the implications it has impacts on less developed and developing countries. Observation showed that these countries often had the ones to suffer the most from having large numbers of citizens moving abroad for work and educational opportunities (Dodani, & LaPorte, 2005; Ifanti et al., 2014). Brain drains not only deplete countries of their intellectual capital but also lead them to a large decrease in overall economic productivity (Sukumaran, 2017). Furthermore, the financial losses from brain drain are extensive, as the governments of such countries often are unable to recover the investment made in the education of citizens of the country chosen to leave.

From a continental perspective, Pakistan has not done enough to prevent the continued emigration of skilled professionals. This is a major problem in South Asian countries, including Pakistan, because the lack of skilled workers has huge devastating effects on essential sectors of the economy such as agriculture, business, engineering, education, and health. Additionally, the xenophobic sentiment that has grown in the region can be attributed to this pattern of brain drain. As such, it is essential to develop effective strategies to hold such spiralling negative effects.

Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

Push and Pull Theory

In this paper, the push-pull theory is used that compares the two important factors of forces and factors of helping, known as push and pull, respectively. The push factors aim individuals to move to another country due to the worse situation of the country of their origin, while the pull factors are ones that attract the individuals and the aspirants feel that the host country will improve the person in various aspects, including the income and standard of living, and so on (Miller, 1967). Some of the factors included are listed as political, economic, environmental, and cultural factors. This theory explains that people may develop certain perceptions in mind, and such individuals may move towards the host

country in order to enjoy these benefits in a better way (Horvat, 2004; Naumovski, 2021).

Brain Gain Theory

Similar in nature to the above theory, another theory known as the brain gain theory, suggested by Fan and Stark (2007), was used in many empirical studies in the past. This theory determined that the more skilled workers or individuals used to move from developing countries to developed countries due to a number of reasons such as politics, economics, the standard of living and better job opportunities so on. Mostly, it has been noticed that the highly skilled people with formal education, “tertiary education,” are moving at a large levels from developing countries to developed countries. Somehow, this approach benefitted both individuals and the whole economy as well.

Empirical Studies Hypothesis Development

There are various studies that have found the key factors which force individuals to move from their home country to the host country. In a study conducted by Khan et al. (2012), there are many factors that are responsible for brain drain; however, job opportunities, inflation and security issues cannot be ignored. All of these factors directly relate to governmental authorities; they do ensure young graduates should not move to the host country for the above-described reasons (Hashmi et al., 2012; Parveen et al., 2022). An empirical study conducted by Bang and Mitra, (2011) also identified that the political institutions should play the role and develop skills among the labor for better productivity and income (Mlambo, V. H., & Adetiba, T. C., 2019). A study revealed that the key problem of brain drain is the economic policy that the existing government hold practically. Likewise, other studies confirmed that the economic policy surely strengthens the country’s economy and may avoid the problem of brain drain within the country (Torbat, 2012; Ben-David, 2009; Dohlman et al., 2019; Ryndzak, O., & Bachynska, M., 2022). In addition, the government should facilitate

recently graduating individuals involved in thinking about brain drain activity and emigration after completion of their education to search for jobs in host countries (Yin & Yeakey, 2019; Vincent, E. A., 2022). In developing countries, a common problem has been noticed that the students, after their tertiary education, move to developed countries due to political instability and better job opportunities which are matching their skills and formal education, for instance, Doctor and Engineers, etc. (Oberman, 2013; Anderson, K. H., & Kayastha, A., 2018; Biglari et al., 2022).

However, there are some governments which believe that the brain drain is a good approach and is more productive in order to earn foreign reserves (Kaukab, 2005; Van Hoek, F. J. 2020). This activity will have an impact on remittances and direct transactions, which ultimately boost economic growth within the country, and the burden on the government may be reduced to a great extent (BenDavid, 2009; Ahmed et al., 2021). Many students from various fields, including the medical, engineering, business, and agriculture etc., have moved to host countries, mostly developed ones and sharpening own skills in a better manner as compared to their home country (Sbalchiero & Tuzzi, 2017; Yuret, 2017; Venkatram, R., 2022). The per capital income of an individual is also to be taken into consideration. In this regard, a recent study carried out by Chigozie (2014) suggested the push and pull factors in the context of brain drain in Nigeria. The results of the said study revealed that the Nigerian students also confirmed a few factors which are almost the same in all developing countries, including Pakistan, including unemployment, low-level salaries or wages, and poor leadership, leading to brain drain into the developing countries. Kim and Allen (2018) discussed in the study that most educated professionals moved overseas, and this created a serious problem for developing countries in the shape of a brain drain. In the past like, these studies argued by (Maria and Lazarove, 2012; Pais et al., 2018; Panagiotakopoulos, A., 2020; Zahra, A., & Bach, T., 2022), people with

tertiary education are moving from less developed countries like Pakistan to foreign countries.

In light of the above theoretical framework and empirical studies following hypothesis and conceptual framework are recommended:

H1: Economic instability positively related to brain drain among business students of Pakistan.

H2: Political instability is positively related to brain drain among business students of Pakistan.

H3: Foreign Job opportunities positively related to brain drain among business students of Pakistan.

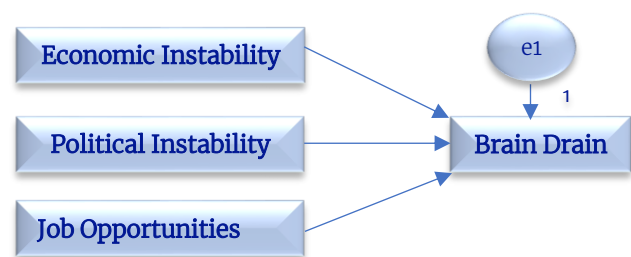


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Methodology

Data Collection and Procedure

This is a quantitative study, so the deductive approach will be applied. This study is based on the cross-sectional survey-based method in the form quantitative research approach. The current study is quantitative, so the researcher has adopted a descriptive study. The target population was identified as the students of business studies who recently completed terminal degrees in different cities in Pakistan. It is suggested that the quantitative research approach be selected when the existing literature is sufficient and the researcher wants to determine the impact of independent variables on the dependent variables (Bartram, D., 2021; Yusr et al., 2017; Creswell and Creswell, 2003). The population should be aligned with the research objectives and hypothesis of the study (Hung et al., 2010). In regard to the population, the existing literature suggests that the brain drain is mainly detected in individuals who have tertiary education in developing countries like Pakistan. Therefore, business graduates from

major cities of Pakistan, including Karachi, Lahore, Quetta, and Peshawar, were requested to fill out the online questionnaire with the help of google Forms. A developed questionnaire link was shared with the individuals on various social media platforms in order to reach the maximum number of the right respondents. In the present, the convenience sampling strategy, a technique of non-probability, is taken into consideration. Data was gathered in the two months time period from September 2022 to October 2022. A total of 300 questionnaires were shared online through an online survey with the help of Google Forms. Individuals were reminded a number of times in order to fill out the shared questionnaire; however, the author of this received only 250 filled questionnaires. Therefore, the response rate for this study is 83 %, and this response rate is acceptable, as recommended in the study (Batty et al., 2020; Gold et al., 2010).

Measurement and Scale

The independent variable of economic instability is taken from the research of Kangasniemi et al. (2007). Sample research items are “Standard of living is higher than expected, Better facilities or working conditions, Not working for some other reason, or working elsewhere and experienced spells of involuntary unemployment as a qualified business graduate”.

The independent variable job opportunities are taken from the research of Kangasniemi et al. (2007). Sample items are given as “Lack of job opportunities in Pakistan, Better career opportunities at a foreign country, Higher salary,

at least 2 lacks per month, and Career prospects are better than expected”.

The independent variable of political instability is taken from the research of Kangasniemi et al. (2007). Items are “Political conditions are worse than expected, Political differences are larger than expected, Political conditions lead to lack of job opportunities in the Pakistan and Political conditions badly affected the income of individuals in Pakistan”.

The dependent variable brain drain is adopted from the study of Güngör & Tansel (2008), “Left Pakistan to get away from the political environment, Higher level of income is chosen as an important pull factor, Lifestyle preference is given as an important initial reason for going abroad and Inability to find a job in own country”.

Results and Discussion

Convergent Validity and Reliability

It is highly suggested that the validity and reliability of the adopted questionnaire should be checked before the hypotheses testing process in order to validate the recommended hypotheses. It can be seen in Table 1 shows the convergent validity and reliability of this study. The item loading is more than 0.50, as suggested by research scholars (Hair et al., 2010). Moreover, the average variance extraction is also more than the recommended value of 0.50. Lastly, both value Cronbach alpha value and composite reliability are also greater than recommended value of 0.70. Therefore, the data of this paper has qualified both validity and reliability.

Table 1. Convergent Validity and Reliability

Construct	Research Items Coding	Items loading	Cronbach alpha value	Composite Reliability	AVE
Economic Instability	EI1	0.953	0.934	0.954	0.838
	EI2	0.958			
	EI3	0.907			
	EI4	0.838			
Political Instability	PI1	0.958	0.963	0.973	0.899
	PI2	0.955			

Foreign job opportunities	PI3	0.943	0.944	0.959	0.855
	PI4	0.938			
	FJO1	0.930			
	FJO2	0.945			
	FJO3	0.929			
Brain Drain	FJO4	0.894	0.963	0.973	0.901
	BD1	0.957			
	BD2	0.949			
	BD3	0.943			
	BD4	0.948			

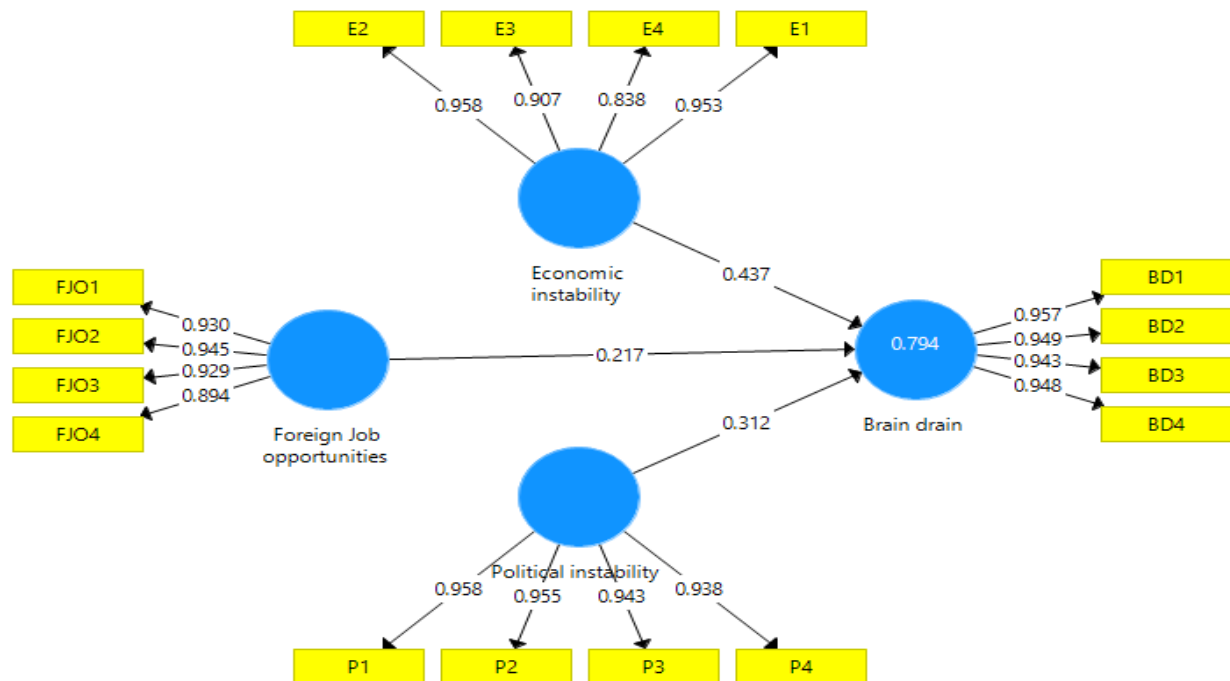


Figure 1: Model Fitness

Hypothesis Testing

Economic instability and Brain Drain

In this research phenomenon, the first hypothesis is proposed with the help of an existing literature review on the positive and significant impact of economic instability and brain drain in Sindh, Pakistan. After data collection, multiple regression analysis is applied in structural equation modelling (SEM). The results confirmed that there is a positive significance with beta values $\beta = 0.428$ and $t\text{-value} = 4.771$. The $t\text{-value}$ is taken as a decision criterion; if the $t\text{-value}$ is greater than 1.96, then the proposed alternative

hypothesis 1 is accepted, and the null hypothesis is rejected. The results of the multiple regression analysis of this study are shown in Table 2.

Political Instability and Brain Drain

In the processes of the current study, the second hypothesis is proposed with the help of an existing literature review on the positive and significant impact of political instability and brain drain in Sindh, Pakistan. After data collection, the multiple regression analysis is applied in structural equation modelling (SEM). The results confirmed that there is positive significance with

beta values $\beta = 0.218$ and $t\text{-value} = 4.048$. The t -value is taken as a decision criterion; if the t -value is greater than 1.96 then proposed alternative hypothesis 2 is accepted, and the null hypothesis is rejected. The results of the multiple regression analysis of this study are shown in Table 2.

Foreign Job Opportunities and Brain Drain

In this, the third hypothesis is proposed with the help of an existing literature review on the

positive and significant impact of foreign job opportunities and brain drain in Sindh, Pakistan. After data collection, the multiple regression analysis is applied in structural equation modelling (SEM). The results confirmed there is positive and significance with beta values $\beta = 0.320$ and $t\text{-value} = 5.720$. The t -value is taken as a decision criterion if the t -value is greater than 1.96 then proposed alternative hypothesis 3 is accepted, and the null hypothesis is rejected. The results of the multiple regression analysis of this study are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Multiple Regression analysis

Path Effects	Path Beta Value	t-value	Remarks
Economic instability and Brain Drain	0.428	4.771	Supported
Political instability and Brain Drain	0.218	4.048	Supported
Foreign job opportunities and Brain Drain	0.320	5.720	Supported

Source: Author's estimations

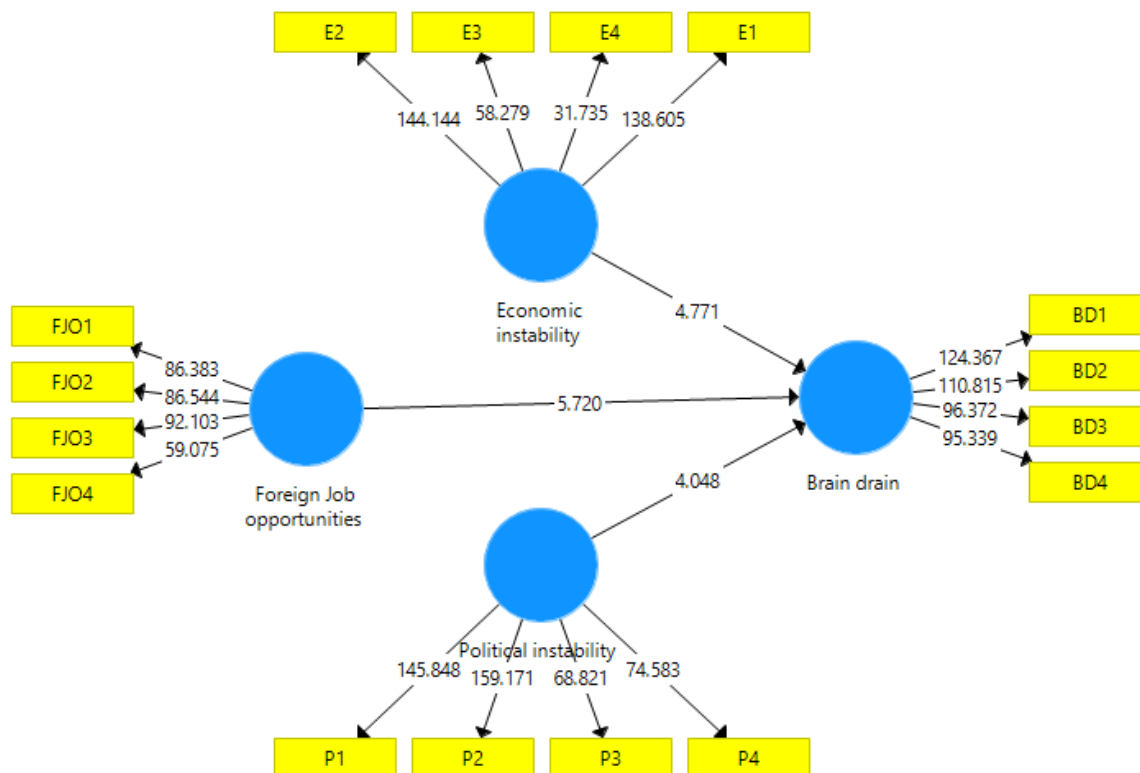


Figure 2: Regression Analysis

Discussion on Results

The findings of the present study revealed all suggested hypotheses based on past empirical studies are found to be a positive and significant impact on economic instability, political instability and foreign job opportunities on brain drain in developing countries. Therefore, all three alternative hypotheses are accepted, and the null hypothesis is rejected based on the t-value, which is greater than 1.96. Past studies' results are also aligned with this study's findings. The study revealed economic crisis and political instability have a significant impact on the brain drain in developing countries (Torbat, 2002; Aarhus & Jakobsen, 2019). Similarly, Shahabadi et al., (2014) also confirmed the same results for all three variables economic instability, political instability and foreign job opportunities on brain drain in developing countries. In addition, the unemployment rate is the key reason for recent graduates to move to developed countries due to higher job opportunities with a better standards of living (Ramos, 2019). Lastly, employment opportunities are working as the pulling power (Gokbayrak, 2008). An individual strives for a better quality of life after completion of education not only for himself or herself but also for immediate family too (Lordoglu, 2015).

Concluding Remarks and Practical Implications

The current paper analyzed the positive impact of economic instability, political instability and foreign job opportunities on the brain drain in developing countries and especially in Pakistan. The primary data is gathered in order to validate the recommended hypotheses drawn from the existing literature review. The literature suggested the significant and positive impact of economic instability, political instability and foreign job opportunities on brain drains. Recently graduating business students were taken as the sample for the current study. The findings of the present study revealed that all three hypotheses, H₁, H₂ and H₃, are accepted.

However, the new finding of the study is that the highest impact level of foreign job opportunities variable has a more positive and significant impact on brain drain in the business graduates of Pakistan.

This study revealed these three key variables are important and are the cause of brain drains among business graduates in developing countries like Pakistan. The country's top management should take these variables and related issues into future policies and encourage the youth of Pakistan to serve the country right after the completion of education. The brain drain is a serious issue and should be addressed, and impact of reduced to a great extent with the corrective and timely actions of the top management officials of the government of Pakistan and other developing countries.

Furthermore, along with the contributions of this study, there are a few limitations that might be overcome by research scholars in the future. First, this study is based on only recent phenomenon regarding business graduates, in future students from various fields be the population of the study taken from Pakistan in order to validate the existing findings of the current study. Second, due to resource constraints such as time and cost, only 250 respondents were considered. Future research may increase the sample size. Lastly, this study is cross-sectional in nature; in the future existing findings could be verified through the longitudinal nature of studies.

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