

An Empirical Study on the Factors Affecting the Migration of Sri Lankan Professionals to Qatar

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Since the boom in the oil industry in the mid-1970s, the Gulf region has increasingly become an attractive destination for Sri Lankan temporary professional migrants. Among the Gulf nations, Qatar has attracted the highest number of professionals since 2011. The decision of Sri Lankan professionals to migrate to Qatar has been influenced by various push factors in Sri Lanka and pull factors in Qatar. The primary objective of this paper is to identify these push and pull factors that motivate Sri Lankan professionals to migrate to Qatar. The study is based on primary data gathered via in-depth interviews with 12 key informants and an online survey of 125 professionals representing three professions (engineering, quantity surveying and accounting). The sample for the questionnaire was selected using a combination of non-probability methods of convenient, snowball and judgement sampling and the data gathered was analysed using a mixed methodology. Among the various factors that affect the migration of Sri Lankan professionals to Qatar, the study identifies that the pull factor of highly attractive salary and benefit packages offered in Qatar as the most influential factor. The study also classifies the reasons for the migration of Sri Lankan professionals to Qatar into three categories as income-related factors, career-related factors and quality-of-life-related factors, and identifies that the primary cause for the migration of Sri Lankan professionals to Qatar is due to income-related factors, followed by career-related and quality-of-life-related factors.

Keywords: migration; mixed methodology; professionals; Qatar; Sri Lanka