

Out-migration: A Relief Valve for a Local Economy A Case Study of Hanoi's Female Workers in the Context of Economic Crisis and Recession

Mai Tuyet Thi Vu¹

¹ National Economics University, Ha Noi, Viet Nam

Correspondence: Mai Tuyet Thi Vu, National Economics University, Ha Noi, Viet Nam. E-mail: maivu@neu.edu.vn

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Abstract

Economic crisis and recession has been the context for many research taking through. However, no little research has been done on out-migration of female workers in Vietnam, particularly in Ha Noi. Basing on an empirical research and using mainly the survey results, this paper seeks to understand how the pattern and trend of the out-migration female workers has been changed; what factors determined the out-migration and how the consequences are in the context of the economic crisis and recession. This paper also improves the out-migration act as a “relief valve” for a local economy where jobs and investment opportunities are scarce and the migration out flow from urban to rural is more vulnerable to economic shocks.

Keywords: economic crisis, female workers, migration, out-migration, policy

1. Introduction

Vietnam has experienced rapid economic change and reform since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. Rapid economic growth has brought about a change in the economic structure. The GDP share of agricultural production has decreased, while that of industrial and service output has increased. Consequently, employment patterns have changed as the industrial and service sectors became more labour intensive. Urban-based investment policies have turned the major cities into the premier economic development centres. The establishment of private companies and organisations and flows of foreign investment into large cities have created more job opportunities for people in these urban places. 2008 since declaring of economic crisis and recession, the recent period of unparalleled economic growth and prosperity has come to an abrupt end in Vietnam, particularly in Ha Noi. Vietnam economy had grown significantly (GDP growth rate – 8.7%) in 2007 and fell to 5.3 in 2009 (GSO, 2009) and this in turn is having impact on unemployment rate, 45 million labourers were unemployed in 2009. As shown in Look at Vietnam (2009), the economic slowdown has the most impact on low level of education and unskilled migrants from poor rural areas who come to the city to look for a better life. In a research done by the Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development, the data indicates that 21 percent of internal migrants had come back their own villages due to losing jobs. Of those, only 11.3 percent found employment in rural areas. This rate is very low in remote areas (between 2.7 and 7.4 percent).

Ha Noi is one of the largest and most developed city in Vietnam with wide ranges of factories and private shops which have involved the recruitment of many workers from rural areas and being the first place in term of having impacts of the global recession. As stated in MOLISA (2009), under the impact of this crisis a lot of people, especially women in private and joint-venture companies in large cities become unemployed. Ha Noi is the place where there are the largest numbers of workers working in this kind of companies (about 60,000), and of course the number of unemployed has been the highest. The crisis has pushed a number of female workers out of the workforce.

For policymakers and analysts, the economic crisis raises fundamental questions about how migrants who are already here and those slated to enter in the coming years will fare and how they might respond to the economic downturn. These questions appear particularly daunting because there has been no comparable crisis in recent memory. Both analysts and policymakers face many unknowns. Now, more than ever, expert judgment and

insight must provide guidance. Moreover, like other developing countries where rural-urban migration has attracted the attention of many researchers and policy-makers, research on rural-urban migration in Vietnam is huge, although there is no research on out-migration of female workers since the crisis and potential negative consequences and impacts of the out-migration are ignored.

This paper aims to fill the gap in the literature by using a combination of macro and micro analyses under the empirical research, address how the female workers migrating in Ha Noi changed since the economic crisis and recession began, particularly the shifting of its trends and patterns, determining factors affected the female workers out migration flow and its impacts. It begins with an overview of concepts and types of out-migration and then the overview of internal migration in Vietnam. The changing flows and patterns of the out-migration of female workers in Ha Noi in the context of the economic crisis is analyzed. It also examines factors determining female labour out-migration in economic crisis and recession, impacts of the out-migration and concludes with some policy recommendations.

This research cannot answer the full range of questions that arise from the complex relationship between out-migration flows and business-cycle fluctuations or measuring the impacts of economic crises on out-migration female workers. The economic crises and recession is a context in order to consider how the out-migration female workers behave.

2. Migration and Out-migration: Concepts, Types and Model

Migration is a complex event, there are difficulties in putting theoretical concepts into practice (Scharping, 1997; Standing, 1984). Unlike birth and death which have very clear-cut definitions because they happen only once in a person's lifetime, migration may occur more than once (Bilborrow, 1998). International Organization of Migration (IOM) defines that migration is "a process of moving, either across an international border, or within a State. Encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes; it includes refugees, displaced persons, uprooted people, and economic migrants" (IOM, 2011, p. 79). The process of moving out a place within a State is called out-migration and the process of moving in a place within a State is called in-migration. Migration has understood in different ways and concepts in diverse disciplines. While geographers and demographers focus on spatial and temporal dimensions of migration, sociologists and economists pay attention to the socio-economic features of this phenomenon (Zhang et al., 2001). The central concerns of demographers are about duration (permanent versus temporary) and distance (crossing provincial borders or moving to another country). However, this approach omits other short- or long-term migrants who do not fit the fixed temporal points set by the census (Standing, 1984). Economists focus on the impacts of migration on the labour market, and sociologists concentrate on the influence of socio-economic, political and cultural factors on migration (Zhang et al., 2001). They use "push" and "pull" forces at origin and destination such as socio-economic, demographic and political factors to explain the migration process.

Scharping (1997) has tried to map out the migration model (Figure 1) in which it explains migration from macro-level data (geographical, economic, demographic and social features) with data on migration decision at the micro-level (individual and household behaviour). Migration is a process of two separate steps but they influence each other. It is believed that geographical position, natural resources and climate make some regions in the country poorer than others. Moreover, the demographic structure such as population density, fertility rate, age structure and household size is also of great importance in rural-urban migration.

Many studies on migration highlight the importance of economic factors (Afsar, 2005; Dang, 2005; Sheng, 2002; Jones, 2002; Guest, 1998a and 2003; Hugo, 2003). The economic structure in regard to the share of the primary sector, secondary and tertiary sector is a major determinant of population mobility. Government policies and measures to stimulate economic development and industrialisation in the less developed world have acted to shift predominantly agricultural and rural societies into more industrialised and urbanised societies at a very fast pace. More employment opportunities, higher incomes and better living standards in the urban places compared to those in rural areas attract people into the city. Market access plays a decisive role in migration. Another economic factor which is significant for population movement is volume and distribution of investment. As a result of the concentration of development in urban areas and the increased employment opportunities with higher income offered, the city becomes attractive to rural-urban migrants (Todaro, 1976; Fuller et al., 1983; Davin, 1999; Dang et al., 1997). Economic theory states that income differences are the most important variable causing migration. Earning a higher income is the major driving force for migration.

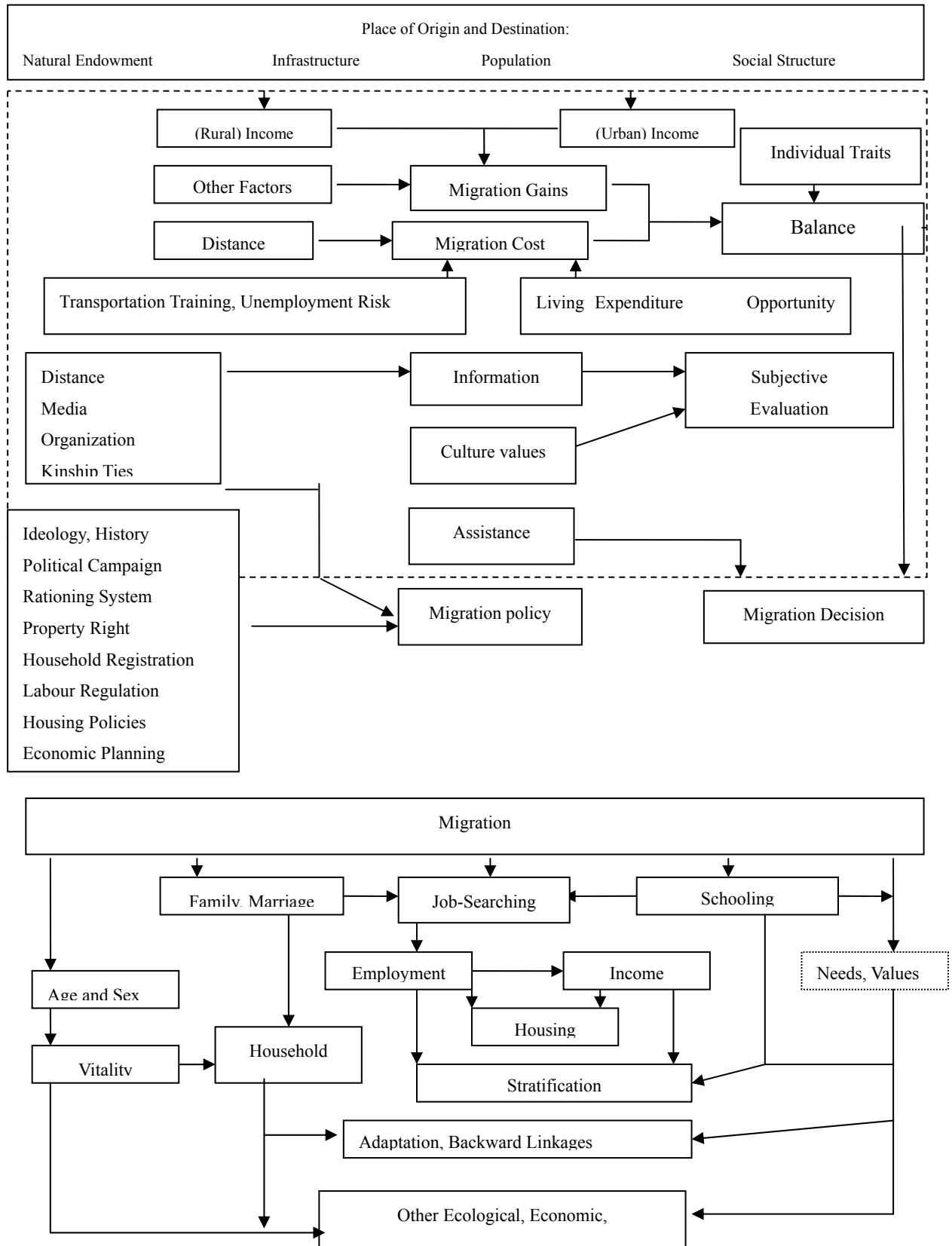


Figure 1. Model of Migration
Source: Scharping (1997, p. 24)

The second layer of the migration model concerns micro-economic factors which are understood as individual people's reasons. In principle, the potential migrant weighs up the cost-benefit and decides to move if they gain from migration. Gains are realised as income improvement and change in regard to the family situation, medical services and social status. Gains from migration should be balanced by personal considerations of migration costs. The costs include transportation, school or training expenses for a new job. Risks arising from possible unemployment or the risk of obtaining only under-paid jobs are also considered as moving risks. Moreover, health risks as a result of hard and unsafe jobs or costs spent trying to obtain work have to be considered. Further migration costs are those concerned with day to day living while looking for a job. The distance from the place of origin and destination also influences migration costs as the greater the distance the higher transportation costs. This may lead to higher living expenditures and greater risks.

Another set of factors which should be taken into account are social behaviours and state interventions; these constitute the third layer of the model. These items are treated by economists as unidentified factors of risk and cost calculation (Scharping, 1997). As stated by Scharping (1997) the impacts of information, assistance and migration policy on the moving decision-making process can be investigated by survey work. However, even in this case where such measurement is difficult or impossible, ignorance of these valuables would cause gross misjudgement. In Figure 1, information, assistance and migration policy are considered as intervening variables influencing migration decisions rooted in personal considerations. These factors in turn are influenced by underlying variables which are grouped into two boxes on the left side of the figure. One of them is social and cultural items, the others are political and legal ones. Since values are regarded as external variables which are too complex for further modelling in the context of migration-related studies, they here refer to lifestyle preferences and the weight given to wealth and status, comfort and risk, autonomy and affiliation. As in China, these variables in Vietnam seem to be relevant in terms of traditional values such as rights and obligations of individuals versus the family and community. This implies the importance of family-based behaviour in matters concerning migration. Unlike other social and economic items, cultural values are generally considered to be much more tenacious and unchangeable. Establishing these cultural values as a variable independent of social and economic items is difficult (Zhang et al., 2001).

The last layer of the model refers to factors concerning impact of migration. The outcomes of migration depend on causes and expectations. In many cases, chances for getting a job are influenced by level of education and family connections, and in turn job-searching results in employment status and income. Income plays a key role in accommodation status and living conditions of migrants. Good education is generally necessary if a migrant wants to be successful (Gardner & Wright, 1984). Employment and income, accommodation and education are the most important indicators of a new social stratification. These immediate outcomes of migration result in other changes in migrants' lives such as health status and social integration. How migrants adapt to the urban environment in turn affects both migrants and the host community.

Migration experiences in Vietnam seem to be more complex due to the link between migration with development and livelihood in the country's context. Despite the state's policies to control population redistribution within Vietnam in different historical periods, the population movement of individuals and families in pursuit of better economic opportunities has increasingly become important now that the free market has been established (Zhang et al., 2001, p. 7). The definition of migration in Vietnam appears to be more complicated than conceptual dichotomy assumes, so analysing Vietnamese migration needs to be integrated into general development programs such as focussed investment policies, household registration system, land use rights, etc. According to General Statistic Office of Vietnam, migration is defined as a process changing place of residence (GSO, 2014b, p. 49). Out-migration of female workers, here and after in this research, is the process of female workers leaving Ha Noi in order to live in another place at least for 12 months since the economic crisis.

3. Overview of Internal Migration in Vietnam

Migration is not only a multiple-dimensional phenomenon; it also has dualistic characteristics (Zhang *et al.*, 2001: 3). In Vietnam, organised migration was the most common form of internal migration before the economic reforms, while spontaneous population movement has dramatically increased since then (Doan and Trinh, 1998). Statistics on Vietnam migration are not fully well ordered thus data of Population and Housing Census (conducted every 10 years) may be regarded as the highest representative database for internal migration in Vietnam. According to the 2009 Census, 9.086 million people (approximately 10.6% of the population) over the age of five had changed their place of residence to a different administrative unit between 2004 and 2009. This is an increase in the number of migrants comparing to 5.816 million captured by the 1999 Census (GSO, 2010). If the number of people moved within a province is separated (maybe due to many non-economic reasons), the number of those having moved between provinces/ cities also increased significantly. The Census over the years

reported an increase in the number of people migrating between provinces from 1.3 million in 1989 to 2 million in 1999 and 3.4 million in 2009. Accordingly, migrants accounts for a larger percentage of the total population, which increase from 2.5% in 1989 to 2.9% in 1999, then 4.3% in 2009; and is expected to grow up to 6.4% in 2019.

The migration flows from rural towards urban and industrial areas has been a dominant flow over the last two decades in Vietnam. The numbers of migrants from rural to urban in 2009 was 1.395.000 people while this number in 1999 was 768.000 people (GSO, 2010).

The number of female migrants accounts for a large percentage among migrants. According to the 2009 Population and Housing Census, more than 50% of migrant groups were female (including migration between provinces, migration between districts, and migration within the district boundary). Regarding migration between provinces, the percentage of female migrants was nearly 42% in 1989; it then went up to 50% in 1999 and recently to 54% in 2009. In term of age, the majority of female migrants are aged 15-29, in which those aged from 20-24 are the most popular. Remarkably, among those migrants aged 15-29, the number of female is considerably higher than men (GSO, 2010). Specially, women tended to migrate at slightly younger ages than men over the years. Data from the 1989, 1999 and 2009 Census suggested that the most common age of female migrants declined respectively from 25 to 24 and most recently 23 years old.

4. Out-migration of Female Workers: Pattern Changed since Economic Crisis?

Given the current economic climate, many wonder how the migration in Ha Noi might change and how migrants have already and will likely continue to respond to the recession. Available data suggest both slower growth in the stock of the migration, slightly slowing inflows of migrants and growing outflows of migrants.

4.1 Economic Context

The economic crisis and recession has been damaging significantly labour market conditions in Hanoi. The total employment has decreased since 2008. The latest available labour market statistics (GSO 2014a) show that the average unemployment rate reached 3.1% in 2009 compared with 2.6% in 2007 (Figure 2). The female unemployment rate has fluctuated during the economic slowdown period, but generally it has an increased trend from 2.07% in 2008 to 3.22% in 2013 (Figure 2).

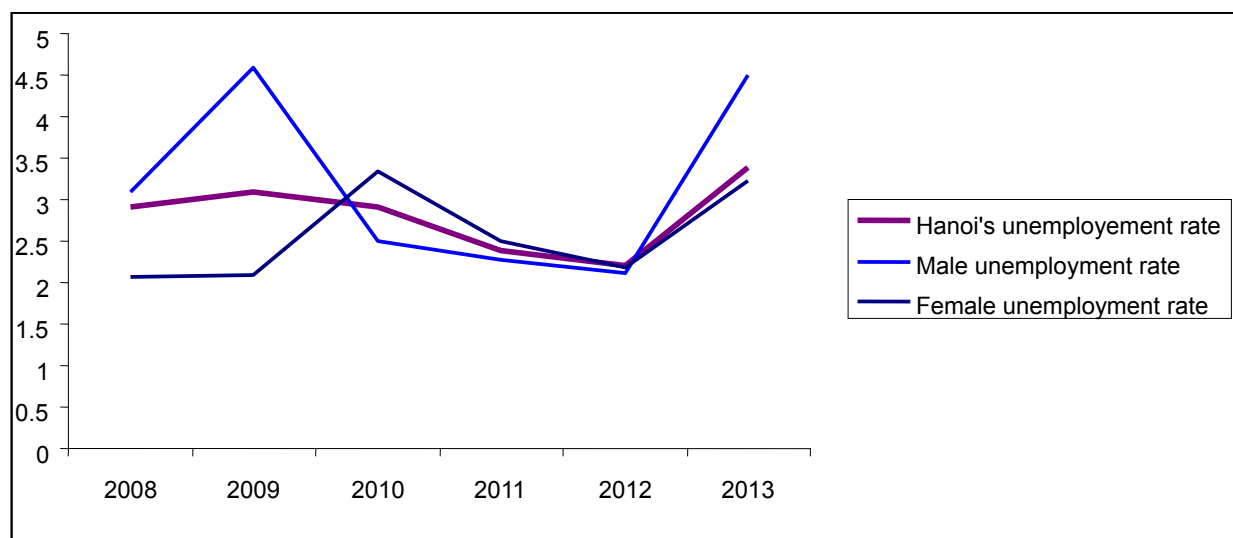


Figure 2. Ha Noi's Unemployment rate of labour force working age by sex (2008-2013)

Source: GSO, 2014a.

The trend has shown that the losing job of the female workers has been impacted by the economic slowdown to some extent. Female workers usually work on industries affected by the economic crisis such as manufacturing, retail sales, financial services and informal sector which are sectors having highest unemployment rate comparing to the others.

4.2 The Stability of Employment

Table 1. Values described variable “time of finding a new job”

Values	2007	2008	2009
Mean	26	29.37	48.15
Median	30	15	20
Mode	30	30	30
Minimum days	1	1	1
Maximum days	60	150	270

As indicated in Table 1, there was a difference regarding the time spent for finding a job from 2007 to 2009 and this gradually increased, 26 days in 2007 to 48 days in 2009. The largest number of days waiting for a job increased from 60 days to 270 days in 2009. However, it didn't relate to difficult factors in the economic situation of finding jobs. In the 3 years, the average scores of difficulty within the female workers groups are from 2.8 to 3.2. As mentioned above, the reason for unemployment was because of “being on maternity leave” or “waiting for finding a better job”. These were main reasons rather than the difficulty of finding jobs. It was noted clearly in the reasons for changing jobs. Nearly 40% of people had been changing jobs for 3 years from 2007 to 2009 because “they were actively trying to improve their income”. Also, nearly 20% of people being asked said that they were active in changing jobs to improve working hours so as to increase their income and support their family better.

However, through qualitative information we can clearly see some reasons related to the increased job changed market over the 2 years, 2008 and 2009. For the rural and urban female groups in business or freelance fields, it was because of the increased prices, while their business was decreased and their income reduced. They had to be flexible to find other jobs to earn more money. Meanwhile, for the worker group, some business contracts were canceled, affecting their income because overtime was reduced. Then, there were many enterprises recruiting workers and “promising” higher salary to attract workers. Many workers left their former factories to find new jobs. Remarkably, “changing jobs” mainly happened among workers who had worked in the city for one year. With low pay and small subsidiary, there is weak if no commitment between companies and these workers.

One idea attracting attention in the survey is that there was a remarkable ratio of female workers in the Export Processing Zone – Industrial Area who confirmed that they didn't sign any labor contract when being employed. In particular this ratio in 2008 was 12.9%, higher than 1.5% in 2007 and 2% in 2009. There is no quantitative evidence to explain the reason why many female workers did not sign labor contracts, however; the qualitative information showed that the main reason was the laborers' awareness. Some workers accepted the seasonal short term employment forms, at the same time they got “*gut feeling*” so they didn't care or require the contract to avoid binding both sides. With this labor group, the top favorable conditions attracting them to the job were that their income was as high as possible; they didn't pay attention to other regulations to ask their employers. It affected their rights when appearing the reduced labor and the protection of law when having labor dispute. A company manager judged: “Demand of labor is higher and higher. The transfer of labor in each industry is very big; especially textile industry, the ratio of recruiting new workers is 30%-40%. Workers don't have permanent residential status, so they just pay attention for direct income, rarely thinking of long-term rights. There are some companies competing by giving salary policy higher than their competitive companies, just a few hundred thousands VND per employee per month but avoiding the obligations such as social insurance and health insurance for them. Enterprise apply the “way” to try to recruit people in large numbers, long contracts, and making the targets, high productive capacity, so the workers can't reach to control their income levels. So, payment of a little higher than that in the long run is disadvantaged” (A manager of a company in the industrial zone).

Meanwhile, the group of workers with long seniority to work was afraid to change because there were benefits associated with the company. Since then, their psychology didn't want to change:

“In general, economic crisis is a global crisis. If we change from this company to other company, is it easy to make us more work to do? So I thought trying to do my job, and I not will change my job.” (A female worker having 5 years working for a company).

Secondly, with rural and urban female group of business or self-employed group, the pricing at this time increased, their income was reduced. They must be flexible to switch to other jobs in order to find better ways to create income.

Approximately 36% of comments in the study sample to confirm their choice on the basis "suitable with ability." This is the priority criteria for their choice of employment. Meanwhile, other criteria such as choosing a job with "high income", "suitable with interest" had rather low percentage of women in all 4 groups. There were only just over 10% choosing to the income criteria and 17% choosing to interest. In fact, the above choosing job criteria was quite consistent with the characteristics of population in the research sample. Because the majority of respondents were unskilled workers, limited levels of skill and financial capital, what they needed was jobs and immediately income to sustain life. They would tend to accept any suitable job with their available circumstances. In term of employment, they have little choice. Therefore, not many workers have works that match their requirements. This makes them tend to adapt quickly and find another manual job if there was any change occurring.

Assessment of satisfaction with current employment, approximately 2/3 female employees in the research was "satisfied" or "relatively satisfied." Percentage of "very satisfied" was not high, only about 6%. The satisfied reason was mainly current job suitable with the individual health (28% of comments). Business and freelance groups, they were pleased because working time is not restrictive (above 26%). With the "unsatisfied" case, there were notable differences among four groups.

The following figure (Figure 3) shows, the freelance group has the most "unsatisfied" rate, always fluctuating around 25% of comments. Especially in 2008, this percentage was up to 27.5%, and then reduced to 23.4%. The next group was the group of workers and the percentage of recorded comments in 3 years was about 17%. However, this data also showed that in worker group, unhappy attitude decreased over the years. If in 2007 there was 21.7% but in 2009 there was only 12.6%. Conversely, for the officials group, the percentage of "dissatisfied" rose nearly 5% from 2007 to 2009. Some of the main reasons explaining the dissatisfaction were unstable income, hard work, a lot of pressure. As for the worker group, the "unsatisfied" state by the lower income because source of employment status in 2008 was delayed, many contracts were cut or delayed. Most of the participants answered that they knew the crisis from notification by their company.

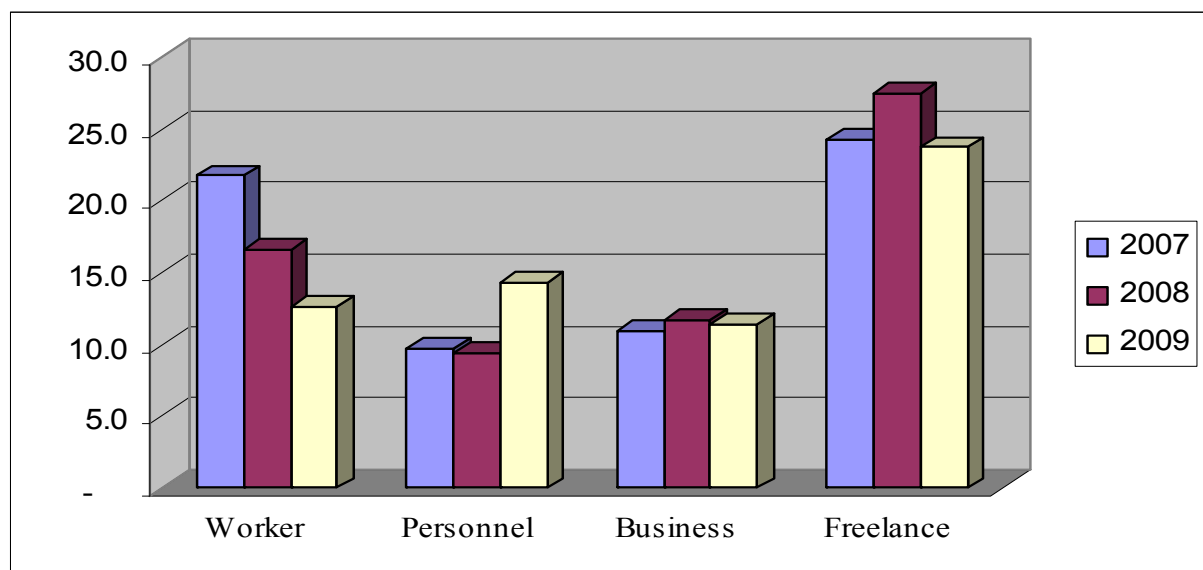


Figure 3. Percentage of dissatisfied on the job in 3 years

Source: USSH survey result in 2010

In short, labor and employment situation of the study sample in the three years 2007-2009 occurred a certain fluctuation. Specifically, it was the shift from formal zone to informal zone; changing employment status of professional groups to adapt working conditions and market prices. In addition, survey results also noted some

cases that female workers in the industrial zones involved in employment provisionally so they didn't signed labor contracts, they were always in thought of short-term working or "jumping job". By comparison in 3 years, it can be noticed that the year 2008 had the most fluctuation. This was consistent with the fact this was the peak year of the global financial - economy crisis. The impact of the crisis affected not only labor groups in the formal sector, particularly the workers, but also the informal sector groups. However, while the groups of workers or officials aware of the presence of the crisis through information and practical activities of the companies or their agencies, the business and freelance group were completely unaware of this event. This made it difficult for them while working out ways to solve problems and adapt the fact. Therefore, it made the rate of "unhappiness" in this group higher than other groups.

4.3 Female Workers Migration Flows Adjust to the Economic Context

The net migration rate has decreased slightly from 4.9‰ in 2008 to 0.3‰ in 2013 (Figure 4). The out flows of the migration increased rapidly from 5.8‰ in 2008 to 7.4‰ in 2013 and inflows of migration has decreased slightly 10.7‰ in 2008 to 7.7‰ in 2013. This trend is relevant to the business context where there were many companies bankrupted. In addition, the rapidly increased immigration in Ha Noi prior 2009 has accumulated unneeded workers and led to the intensive workforce. However, it is not adequate indicator to show that the out-migration fluctuates with the business cycle. The out-migration of female workers acts as a "relief valve" for Ha Noi's economy where jobs and investment opportunities are scarce.

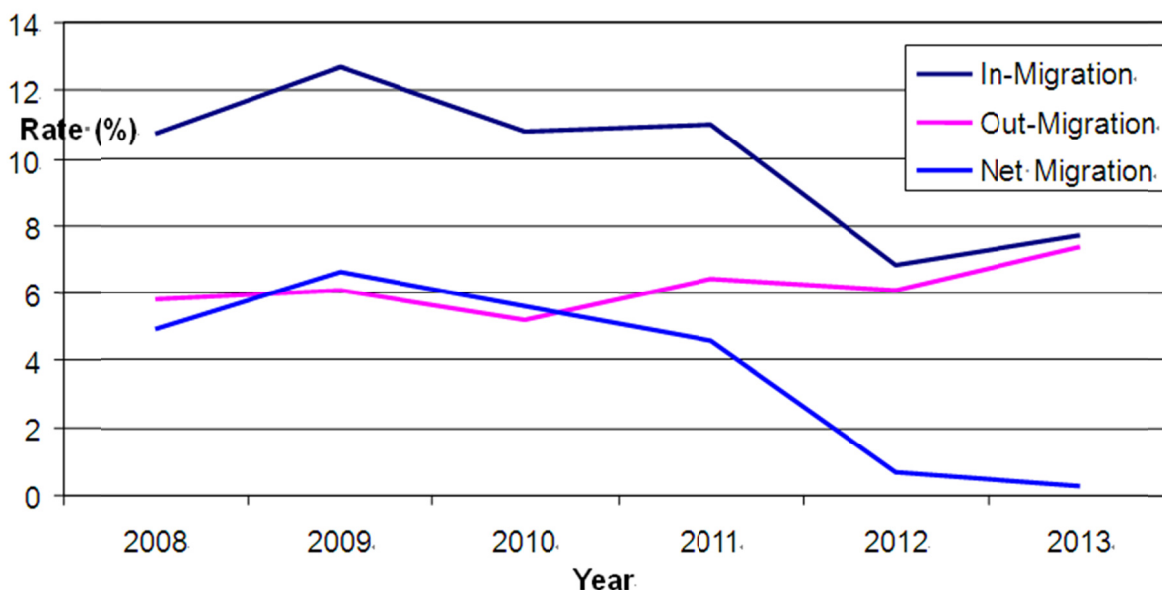


Figure 4. In/Out and Net Migration in Ha Noi

Source: GSO, 2014a

Labor out-migration in response to an economic shock is indeed a 'relief valve', releasing unneeded workers from declining areas and shifting them to regions with better economic prospects. Since adjustment to economic shocks is not instantaneous and may be subject to rigidities, one could envision development strategies designed to increase out-migration from distressed areas.

The "relief valve" hypothesis does depend on certain conditions being satisfied. Individuals must correctly perceive and act on market information, particularly relative wage differentials between regions (Todaro, 1969; Miron, 1979). A major criticism of this view of regional growth is that it is unrealistic to assume that individuals are able to know about—and evaluate—job opportunities and wages in different regions. Researchers have also cited real world examples where migration appears to act as an aberrant market force. This may be the case, for example, if residents from distressed areas perceive metropolitan or rural areas as possessing greater economic opportunities even when this is not the case. Moreover, standard regional growth models assume the full social costs of migration are taken into account. The concentration of population in urban areas and the depletion of population in distressed regions may generate social costs that are not considered by individuals that choose to migrate in search of better jobs or higher wages.

5. Determinants of Female Labour Out-migration in Economic Crisis and Recession

5.1 Push Factors for Female Workers Out-migration

Lee's classic study published in 1966 conceptualizes migration as involving origins, destinations and the links between them. The characteristics of the origin may act as 'push' factors for potential out-migrants whilst the attributes of the destination reflect 'pull' factors that entice migrants to a particular destination. Out-migration is widely considered to happen under the pressure of both push factors and pull factors. Push factors are composed of the difficulties or challenges which labours faced. The study's survey result shows that the proportion of female workers facing difficulties in life when living in Hanoi accounts for 81.5%. Obviously, these female workers are those who mainly live on the low income from the informal employment like freelance, homemaker. Figure 5 shows that the most serious problem challenging female labours is low income with 39% and the second for problem of unstable job with 22%.

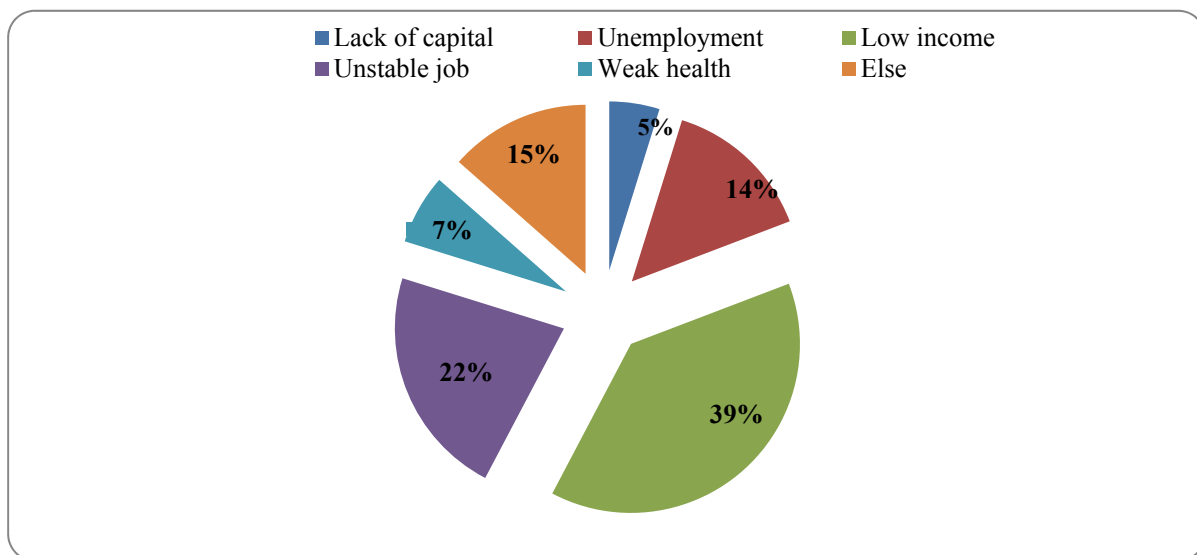


Figure 5. Categories of difficulties

The result of survey showed that health problem is often underestimated by female labours with only 7% in total. Also, only 5% of sample said that they faced the capital – related difficulty. To a large extent, there exists a difference in difficulties that female informal workers and formal workers have. Formal workers often find it difficult for weak health, lack of capital and low income while informal ones encounter the problems related to unstable job. It can be easily explained when focusing on working condition and income of these two groups. Informal workers work in low – income sectors with poor working conditions due to lack of necessary skills. Therefore, they are considered to be more vulnerable in comparison with those working in formal sectors. In contrast, based on the answers of respondents in the survey of this research, economic crisis period has negative impacts on employment of female formal workers when making their jobs unstable. A girl from Nam Dinh province stated:

I was told that Ha Noi is a very beautiful and luxurious city and it is easy to get a job with high pay and no experience needed. But it is completely different, especially during this time. It is crowded, expensive and I had to change jobs several time but still difficult to live. Now, I am losing job...I don't know what to say. I have to move out.

In addition, majority of female labour is living with break-even income to cover their living cost. More specifically, the rate of people living in moderate condition is 59.3% (Figure 6). Before leaving Hanoi, 28.8% of female labour are living in poor and very poor conditions.

The other push factor is from social capital. The two main factors pushing found in this study are from family background and supports from local authority. Family background is always an important variable which has a direct and profound impact to migration strategy among women. From this perspective, family-related issues can be either push factors or pull factors. According to survey findings, family plights are seen one of the main reasons (account for 20%) which push women to migrate in order to find jobs or to unify family.

Unit: %

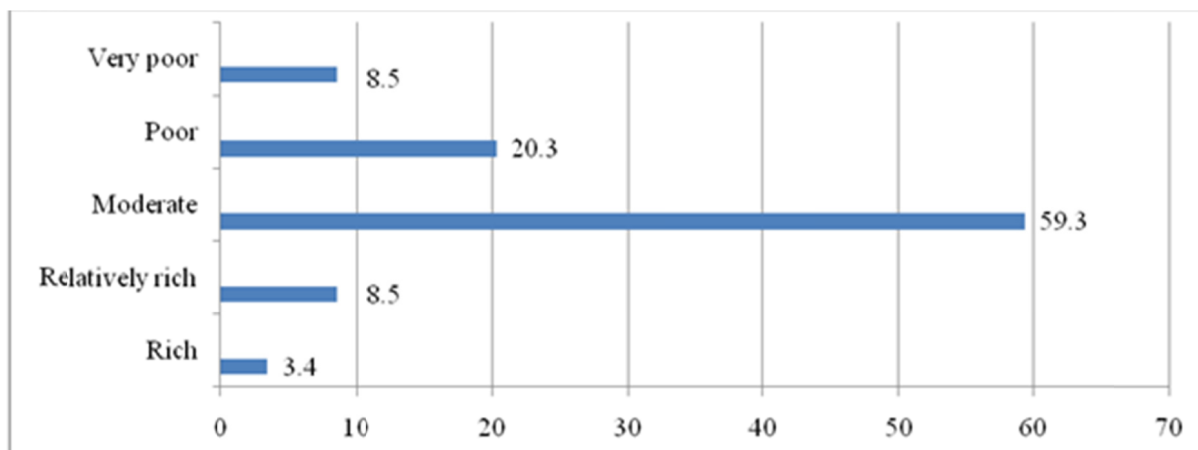


Figure 6. Living standard of female labour

Support from local authority was rare. In survey, nearly 90% of respondents said they did not receive any support from policies or programs of local authority. Instead they got the support from their family (45.5%), from friends (30.1%). The role of trade union in supporting female labour in the rough period is limited. Only 0.7% of respondents said that they received some help from trade union. These have caused the female worker’s life being more vulnerable, especially under the economic crisis and recession pressure.

5.2 Pull Factors for Out-migration

Job opportunities, stable status of job, low living cost, better living condition and family connections are the most common pull factors for female migrants within surveyed area.

The first pull factors are job opportunities and stability at destination. Migrating to seek for job opportunities and generate income are the most common reasons, thus job opportunities are considered as the most important pull variable from the new place. The locations that the migrants decided are their origins which are rural areas or rural areas with emerged industrial zones and the areas with rapidly developed industrial zones. As such, most of female migrants claim they can find something to do in these areas and this is better than they do nothing in Hanoi. Moreover, it is stable job and income. Figure 7 shows that the proportion of labour migrating out of Hanoi due to stable status of job and low living cost is 21.5% and 15%, respectively.

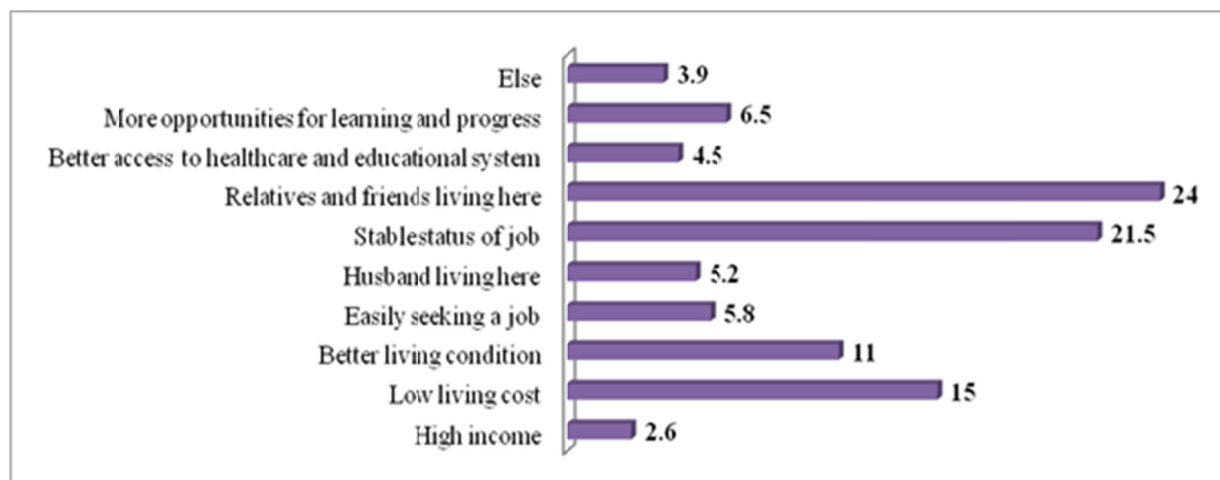


Figure 7. Pull factors of out-migration

After leaving Hanoi to another place to live and work, the reasons explaining for the job choice are different.

Figure 8 shows that majority of female labours choose to do their job due to the suitability with capability. High income becomes the second important reason with the rate of 20.8% while the reason “suitable with hobby” is overlooked with the rate of 8.3%. The most important reason for present arrival is because relatives and friends living there (24%) in which the number of female workers moved to their familiar place accounts for 40% and 60% for the other areas (rural areas, urban areas). This could be explained that when economic context becomes worse and has largely negative impacts on their life, they decided to come to familiar place with the hope to receive the support and comfort partly due to psychological effect.

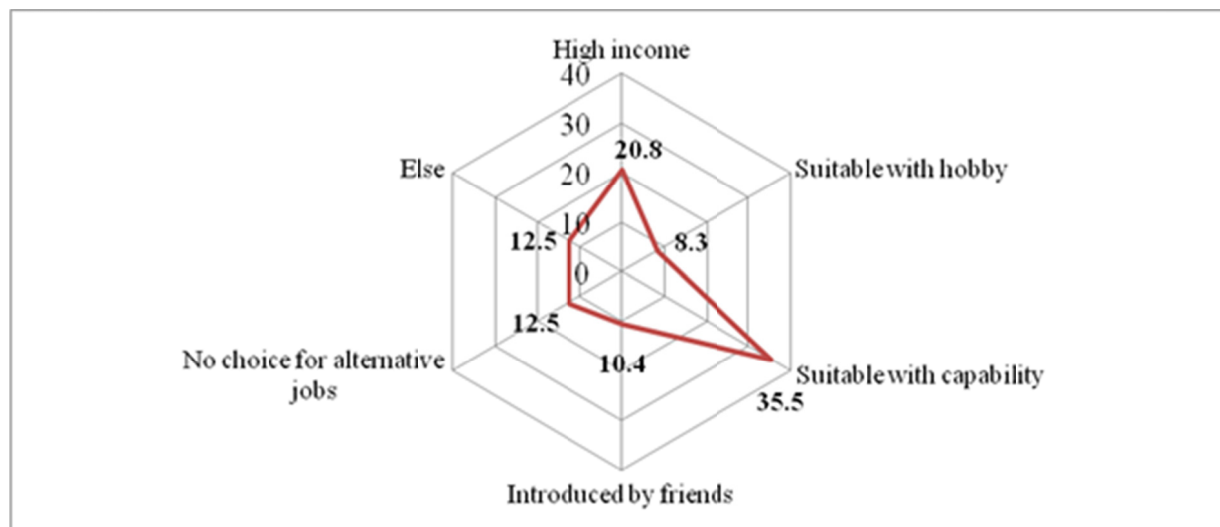


Figure 8. Main reasons for choosing present job

The other pull factors are from social capital. One of the very common pull factors in this research study is that they have husbands, parents, relatives or friends lived or having got a job at place of destination. This pull variable is mainly a form of social capital, through which migrants who have worked at the city capturing some opportunity information then passing and persuading friends and relatives to migrate with them. Figure 8 indicates that the most important reason for female out-migration relates to relatives and friends with the rate of 24%. The number of married female labour only accounts for 33.8%, and it can explain why proportion of female labours out-migrating because of “husband living here” is only 5.2%. This is a very important observation, indicating that social capital is an important social variable for migration decisions among women. In addition to providing information, accommodation and helping settlement, family members and friends can be important psychological supporters for those who make migration decisions. A part from seeking for job opportunities and stability, this form of out-migration would also mean a family gathering. From this perspective, findings revealed by the qualitative survey have noted that losing job in Ha Noi was a good chance for them to look at the opportunity to be gathered. This finding is relevant in the circumstance of unstable labour market, social protection system nearly excluding migrants, the reliance closed persons are the choice for migrants.

6. Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

The economic crisis is damaging labour market conditions in Ha Noi significantly. It is likely to hit female workers migrants and their families particularly hard, threatening most of the progress accomplished in recent years in terms of labour market outcomes. The crisis has led to high unemployment rates and out-migration rates. The labour out-migration flows have been more sensitive to economic changes. The female workers out-migration in Ha Noi has been changed in trends and patterns during the economic crisis and recession. The out-migration flow is a natural process of regional economic adjustment and acts as a “relief valve” for the downturn of the economy where employment opportunities are scarce. Many female workers out-migrants appear to adjust more quickly to labor market upheavals by changing their place of residence for work-related reasons or by changing jobs.

The public development assistance, for the purpose of restricting migration into Ha Noi, designed to reverse population loss and out-migration would be viewed unnecessary and even wasteful (or inefficient). Moreover, trying to “turn off the tap” of labour migration may dry up legal routes and induce more abuse of the system in

the medium term during the recovery phase. The study's empirical findings suggest that it is critical to increase employment in rural areas if out-migration (in urban areas) is to be increased. Integrated rural development can be vital in increasing employment. More investment in job creation in provinces can increase surplus laborers' chances to earn extra payment, thus mobilizing them to live. Investing more in rural infrastructure and public services is key to a rise in overall income of the rural population (Fan and Zhang, 2004), thus 'pull' migrants and returnees.

The migrants are generally more vulnerable during the economic crisis. For some migrants, the economic crisis and recession is good chance to step back and look forward to find suitable jobs that can fully utilize their skills or unified with their family. Therefore, it is necessary to increase controls on non-discretionary migration, including family reunion, may induce unwanted effects on irregular migration or integration. For others, they are also at high risk of long-term exclusion from the labour market and face long-term handicaps in integrating into the labour market. Reducing hurdles to return migration, for example by ensuring portability of social rights or offering an option for re-entry, may lead to more returns than financial support through assisted voluntary return programmes. In addition, inter-provincial disparity in the provision of public services can be narrowed with more equalization transfers to deprived areas, thus yielding efficiency gains in reduced negative externalities in urban areas (Shroeder and Smoke, 2003). More specifically, improvements in health care and education services are likely to cause potential rural migrants to stay put. At destination, the government has to strike a balance between ensuring migrants' access to basic services and protecting their fundamental rights, and refraining from sending misleading signals that may promote in-migration. More importantly, whether enacted in destination or source provinces, all of the policies should be carried out in a coordinated way. Dang et al. (2003) noted the lack of coordination among different ministerial agencies, departments and other institutions currently responsible for one or more aspects of migration in the implementation of migration related policies.

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