

JOB RELOCATION AND ITS PREDICTORS IN INDONESIAN PUBLIC SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

This study is aimed to be a preliminary research related to job relocations in Indonesian public sector, mainly in Ministry of Finance Indonesia. Interviews with employees experiencing job transfers were conducted to further analyze the predictors of job transfers. Results of this research revealed that there are some factors affecting positively to willingness to transfer such as career opportunity, clear transfer path, obligation of officials, culture, and new skills and knowledge. In addition, there are also some factors affecting negatively to willingness to transfer such as initial information, social attachment, pension, unclear transfer path, fairness perception, financial problems, children, spouse's career, geographic location, and adjustmen in new workplaces.

Keywords: job transfer, predictors, relocations

Introduction

Job transfer, as one of human resources practice in Ministry of Finance (MOF), is regulated strictly in Ministry of Finance Regulation Number 39/PMK.01/2009. To be transferred, considerations are stated in the regulation such as competency standard, achievement, tenure, grade, organizational needs, and punishment. Job transfer in MOF are mainly based on two models. The first model is vertical model of job transfer that is conducted by transferring promoted employees. The second model is horizontal model of job transfer that is held by transferring employees to the new - same level position. Another model is that in case of the access to higher or same level is vacant, the employees can be assigned to any lower positions.

The transferring model used by Ministry of Finance aligned with the theory mentioning the relationship between job transfers with career opportunities. Beside applying regular job transfer to all employee levels, MOF's vertical offices are located in all provinces in Indonesia. Considering those facts, this study will be conducted in MOF. Job relocation was one of the effective ways to enhance employee's experiences and exposures that in the long term would increase the likelihood to have better career (Veiga, 1983 and Seibert et al., 2001). In addition, job movement is essential for endorsing employee development and boosting skills (Noe and Barber, 1993; Michalos, et al., 2013). Another finding is that job transfer was seen as new job challenge whereas employees were reluctant

to turn down transfer because they did not want to harm their future career (Luo and Cooper, 1990).

However, one regulation also stated about punishment to employees who delayed the job transfer or performed poorly. The delaying employees are freed from their jobs and transferred to other positions. The researches interconnected with the reason why employees and managers, were unwilling to relocate in scope of Ministry of Finance are scarce. To conduct such a research is quite considerable to minimize the number of punishment and to align the regulation with the factors predicting the willingness to relocate.

Prior studies were conducted to further comprehend the reasons of deserting job relocation. One of the investigations was a hypothetical model of the connection between work and the family (Bhaskar-Shrinivas, et. al, 2005). The employees whose family had a deep-rooted social network within their community are less enthusiastic to receive transfers (Munton, 1990). Another research conducted by Duncan and Perucci (1976), stated that workforces whose partners had their own vocations were less eager to transfer due to the hurdles of finding new occupation in the new residences.

On the other hands, foregoing researches suggested that at least two predictors could be associated with employee's willingness to transfer. The first predictors are time related variables such as age, tenure, and period of living in the area. The later predictor are situational variables such as income, job involvement, family status and spouse's employment status (Gould and Penley, 1985). In addition, the level of job satisfaction with the career progress occasions, as well as clear information about career projections, also affected the readiness of transfer (Landau, Shamir and Arthur, 1992).

In spite of the ongoing debates related to job transfer, a comprehensive research should be established internally to further acknowledge the importance of job transfer for organization and predictor affecting to it. The determinants associating with employee's low commitment to accept job transfer are also important to be captured to minimize the punishment and to provide constructing feedbacks so that regulation and policy in the organization aligns to the needs of the employees. In Indonesia, there are several researches trying to relate the effects of job transfer and promotion on job performance in public sector. Furthermore, there is only one research investigating factors to determine the success of horizontal job transfer in the staff level (Wibowo and Susilowati, 2016). However, a comprehensive study to analyze the success factors of horizontal and vertical job transfer in the managerial and staff levels is still lacking. Thus, this study aims at providing an inclusive study to enrich and fill in the gap in the investigation of willingness to transfer not only for staff but also for managers in Ministry of Finance. In summary, the purposes of this article are to conduct initial research regarding to job transfer in Ministry of Finance and to provide policy paper as a consideration to make regulation.

Theoretical Backgrounds and Hypothesis

Willingness to Transfer

From the organizational view, the repositioning of employees may allow an organization to preserve appropriate staffing levels, impede discharges, and encourage development of its managerial employees. Whereas, from the personal perspective, relocation can be a chance for individual career development. Willingness to transfer is considerable topic for research because its output predicts the decision to accept or discard job relocation (Landau, Shamir and Arthur, 1992).

Even though job transfer and its predictors are important research theme, the research on relocation is still rare, mostly in Ministry of Finance scope. This study is a preliminary study in which the assumption of established determinants is zero, thus the judgment of determinants used in this study is basically derived from two previous research accomplished by Landau, Shamir and Arthur (1992) and Noe, Steffy, and Barber (1988).

According to Noe, Steffy, and Barber (1988), factors predicting the willingness to involve in career movement are career stage, assessment of the favorability of the job, family characteristics, period of job and specialization, movement chances, and career-development opportunity. In the later research, one of antecedent of job transfer, geographic relocation, was added (Noe and Barber, 1993). Likewise, according to Landau, Shamir and Arthur (1992), the determinants of job relocation are divided into two major, factors outside the job scope and factors within the job scope. Outside the job scope predictors are age, gender, marital status, significance of spouse's career, children, elderly family who live nearby, and importance of community ties. Meanwhile inside the job scope predictors are organizational tenure, job tenure, previous experiences of transfer, career satisfaction, and tendency to endure a member of organization.

Based on the mentioned theories, several propositions are selected. The selected propositions are career stage, geographic relocation, marital status, significance of spouse's career, children, organizational tenure, career satisfaction, and career-development opportunity.

Career Stage

Based on previous study, there are three successive career stages: trial, advancement, and maintenance stage (Dalton and Thompson, 1986). Employees in the trial stage (period of 25-30 years), the earliest career stage, are preoccupied with learning how to work according to organization's and manager's norms and expectation. They possibly will be more eager to chase mobility opportunities because they are concerned in exploring diverse types of jobs and assessing individual competence in different expertise areas (Slocum & Cron, 1985). Another study also supported the finding that those in the first stages of their working life would be most probable to be willing to transfer for career development drives (Arthur, Hall and Lawrence, 1989).

Meanwhile, employees in the advancement stage (period of 31-44 years) are alarmed with becoming recognized in their jobs and proving competence in

order to achieve certain goals within the organization. Due to progression needs, motivation to learn is high and additional challenge and responsibility is anticipated at work. Commonly, advancements and mobility are likely perceived as signs of accomplishment (Noe, Steffy, and Barber, 1988).

The challenge of the next stage, maintenance stage (period of 45-65 years) is to stay productive and avoid mechanical obsolescence. Family and community involvement constrain the willingness to relocate opportunities, particularly if repositioning is essential (Schein and Schein, 1978). In other words, staffs in the trial stage of their career were more enthusiastic to accept repositioning than staffs in advancement or maintenance stages. Accordingly, the first proposition is created as follows:

P1: Age will negatively affect to willingness to transfer for career development.

Geographic Factors

Geographic factors may be one considerable determinant that affect the willingness to transfer because, as stated in Director General of Treasury Regulation Number PER-43/PB/2012, the area of relocations are scattered all over Indonesia which are divided to four zones. Geographic transfer may mess up of both work and non-work scope. The transfer can result in pressure and anxiety that emerge from employees' adjustment process to new work environment. The adjustments are more difficult when employees are transferred to the place and community that are significantly dissimilar from the previous community and workplace (Stroh, Brett and Reilly, 1992; Pinder and Schroeder, 1987). Accordingly, the second proposition is created as follows:

P2: Relocation to the place that is more favourable than previous place will positively affect to willingness to transfer

Marital Status

Married employees and those with children still at home may be less eager to reposition because of the disturbances movement may emerge for spouses' careers and children's schooling (Brett and Reilly, 1988; Munton, 1990). In this civilization, the traditional pattern of spouses having the subordinate career in the household (Hall and Hall, 1979), and of women giving priority to household in harmonizing work and family identities (Bielby & Bielby, 1989), proposed married females will be less enthusiastic to transfer than married males. Thus, the third proposition is generated as follows:

P3: Married employees will negatively affect to willingness to transfer

Significance of spouse's career

Married employees whose partners do not work should have fewer hurdles on their willingness to relocate decision than employees whose spouse are employed (Landau, Shamir and Arthur, 1992). However, different results have been founded among scholars. Markham, Macken, Bonjean, and Corder (1983)

found that there was negative relationship between spouse's career and willingness to relocate. Meanwhile, Gould and Penley (1985) informed positive relationship and Noe, Steffy, and Barber (1988) found no connection.

The debate among scholars could be initially concluded that considerable predictor might not be the spouse's employment status, but rather the importance of spouse's career participation and income level. Employees whose spouses are career oriented should be less eager to relocate than those who non-career oriented because a job transfer could disturb the improvement of both their careers and the potential earnings of the family unit (Landau, Shamir and Arthur, 1992). Therefore, the fourth proposition is created as follows:

P4: Employees whose spouse's careers are important will negatively affect to willingness to transfer

Presence of children

Parents having children at home may be more hesitant to transfer for career development or company requirements (Landau, Shamir and Arthur, 1992). According to Veiga (1983), employees who possessed children might reluctant to relocate because their children could be offended socially by the transfer. In addition, the arrangement of education and the availability of childcare might become barriers to accept transfer. When families of employees consist of children, the consequences of a transfer in terms of disengaged social networks, interrupted school activities and improved moving expenses are greater. Accordingly, the fifth proposition is made as follows:

P5: Presence of children at home will negatively affect to willingness to transfer

Organizational tenure

Organizational tenure is defined as organizational commitment in terms of both material and social investments, as well as individual recognitions (Meyer and Allen, 1984; Fox and Krausz, 1987). In similar definition, organizational tenure is defined as the length of employment in an organization (McEnrue, 1988; Shirom & Mazeh, 1988). Organizational tenure is probable to have positive correlation to job tenure and hierarchical level. In the job tenure, the focus is the period of employment, meanwhile in the organizational tenure the main focus is the indicator of work experience, knowledge, and set of work skills that are grasped in the workplace (Ng and Feldman, 2010). Employees with high organizational tenure are assumed to accept job transfer because they need to enhance their skills and experiences. Thus, sixth proposition is created as follows:

P6: Organizational tenure will positively affect to willingness to transfer

Career Satisfaction

Career satisfaction is defined as the overall affective orientation of the individual toward his or her career or work role (Gattiker and Larwood, 1988). Career satisfaction is connected to several considerable organizational outcomes, such as organizational commitment, intentions to leave, and support for organizational change (Martins and Carvalho, 2014). Assumed that job transfer is a career transition process, employees with high career satisfaction tend to agree to take job relocations because they think that the relocations are career opportunities offered by organization. The more employees are pleased with the way the organization has reinforced them in terms of providing opportunities for improvement, access to significant developing assignments, availability of information concerning career projections, the more likely they will accept job transfer (Landau, Shamir and Arthur, 1992). Therefore, seventh proposition is created as follows:

P7: Career satisfaction will positively affect to willingness to transfer

Career-development opportunity

The degree to which the employee's job offers opportunities to improve knowledge and expertise through task accomplishment or involvement in official training programs may be associated to readiness to receive movement options (Noe, Steffy, and Barber, 1988). The employees would have fewer visibility to decide their forthcoming promotions if they lacked of job independence, opportunities to learn, and chances to deal with others (Landau and Hammer, 1986). Commonly, employees assume that job transfer is connected to career-development opportunity because job relocation may enhance broad experiences and encourage specific skills. Consequently, higher incentives and chance of advancements are linked with the expertise and experienced acquired from job relocation (Campion, Cheraskin, and Stevens, 1994). As a result, eighth proposition is formed as follows:

P8: Career-development opportunity will positively affect to willingness to transfer

Theoretical Framework

Eight propositions are depicted in a framework to obviously describe the cause and effect relationship among propositions:

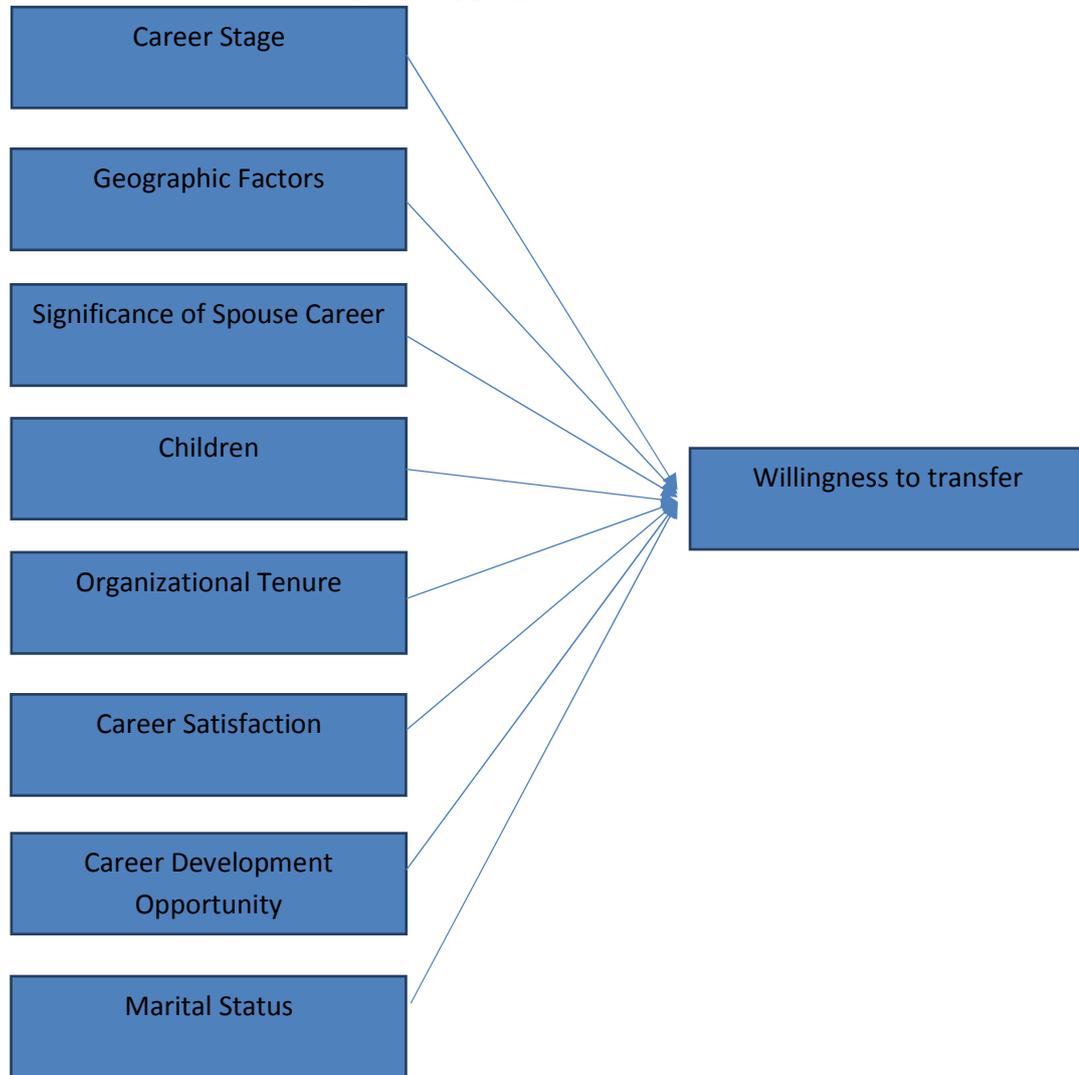


Diagram 1. Propositions related to Factors Affecting Willingness to Transfer (WOT)

Methods

The research will be conducted in one of the biggest Ministry in Indonesia. Data collection will be conducted in at least three ways:

1. In-depth interviews using open-ended questions;
According to Patton (2002), open-ended questions are those allowing the participants to describe their ideas using their own words.

2. Direct observation;
From direct observation, author may acquire data related to the participants' activities, communications, manners, and governmental processes and practices.
3. Document analysis;
Documents analysis covers all activities related to legal documents such as public reports, memoranda, policy documents, and correspondence (Patton, 2002).

To further completing the research, author uses some triangulation such as methods triangulation, data source triangulation, researcher triangulation, and theory triangulation referring qualitative methods suggested by Miles & Huberman (1994).

Findings

Data from three participants were collected for this research. Interviews were conducted to the participants and were stopped after there was no new information related to the aim of the research. From those participants data related to factors supporting willingness to transfer (WOT) and factors hurdling willingness to transfer (WOT) can be depicted as follows:

Factors Supporting WOT

The summary of participants responding factors supporting WOT can be shown in Chart 1.

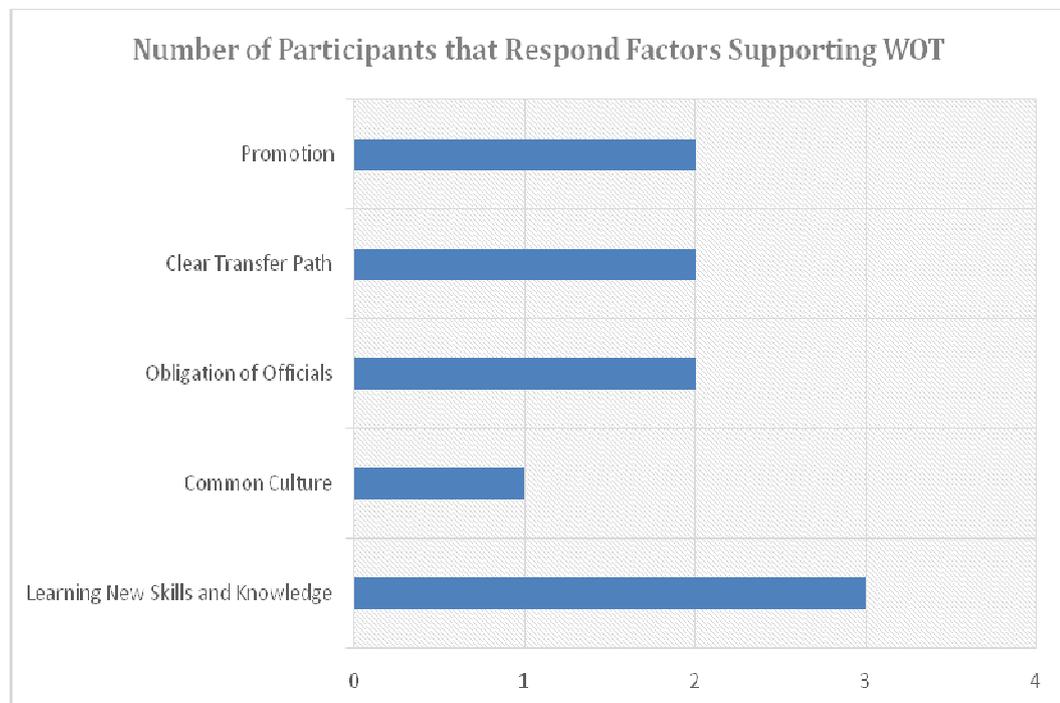


Chart 1. Number of Participants that Respond Factors Supporting WOT

Based on Chart 1., there are five major factors affecting employees to positively support transfer. The first factor is the opportunity to learn new skills and knowledge. All participants mentioned that transfer created chance to learn new skills and knowledge. In addition, two of three participants mentioned promotion, clear transfer path, and obligation as officials are the second, third, and fourth factors positively support relocations. At last, there was merely a participant considered culture as one important factor supporting transfer.

The summary of Number of Repetitions in Interviews showing the Importance of the Factors Supporting WOT can be shown in Chart 2.

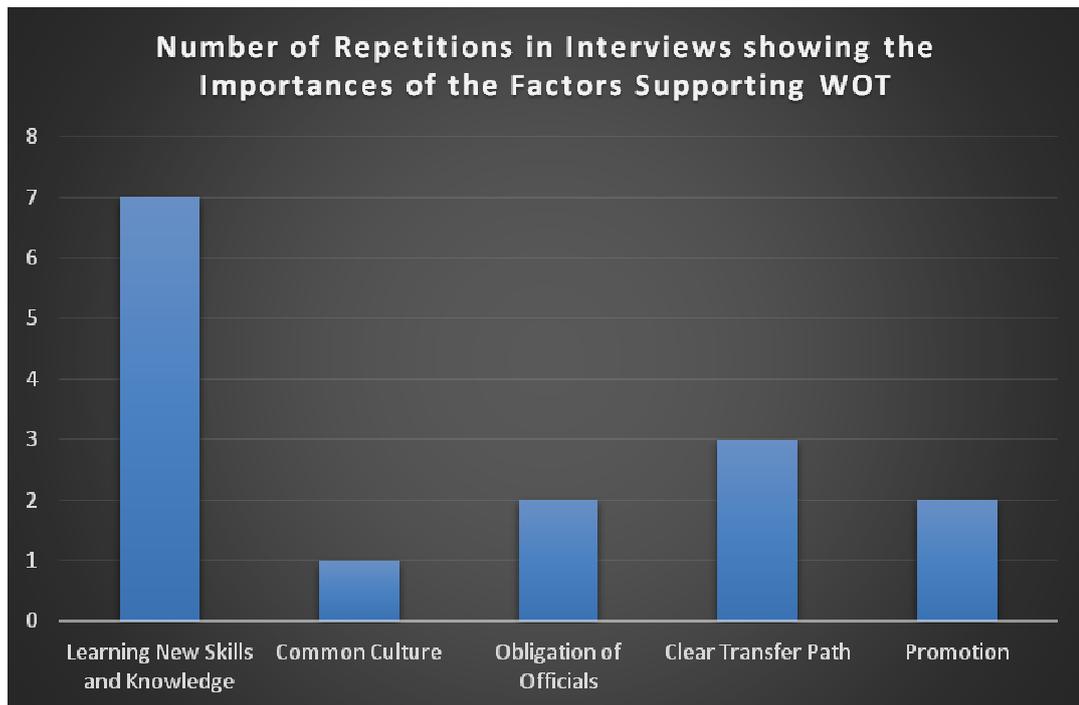


Chart 2. Number of Repetitions in Interviews showing the Importance of the Factors Supporting WOT

Chart 2 depicted on how participants answered questions asked in the interview process. The number of repetitions related the certain factor was assumed as a sign of weight of a factor compared to other factors. Based on the interview of all participants, the weight of Learning New Skills and Knowledge is the highest among all factors. Second highest factor is Clear Transfer Path. Whereas, two factors such as Officials Obligation and Promotion have the same weight. The least weight according to the participants are common culture.

Factors Inhibiting WOT

The summary of participants responding factors inhibiting WOT can be shown in Chart 3.

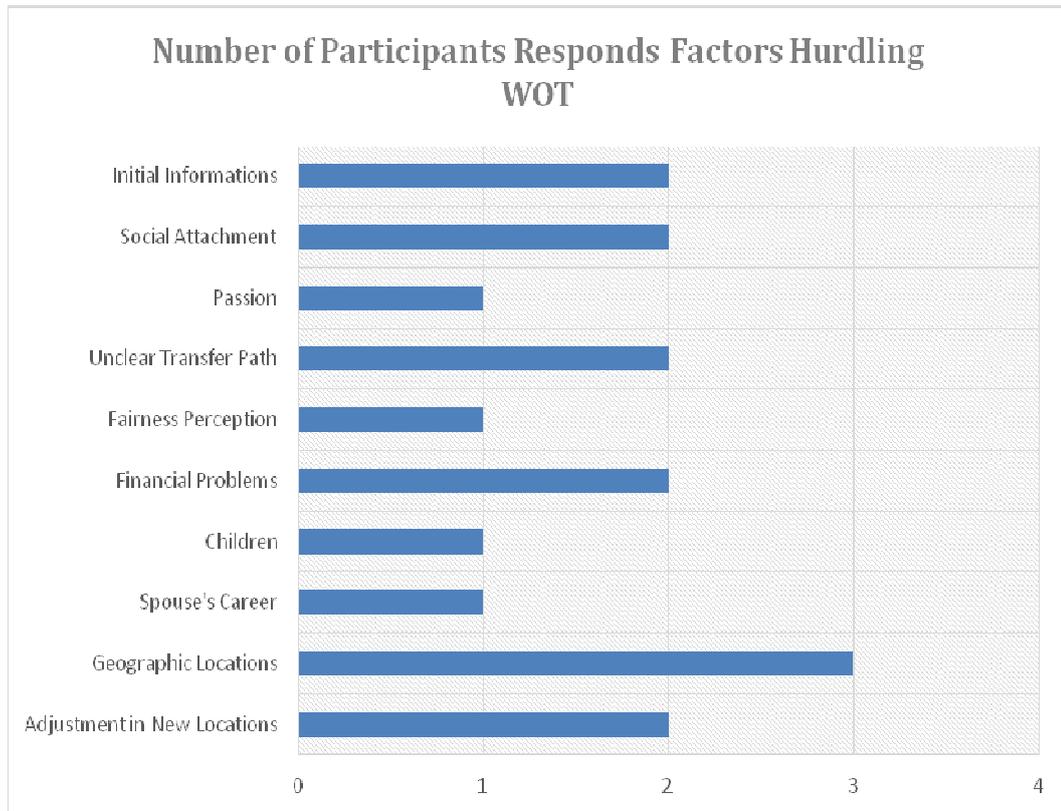


Chart 3. Number of Participants that Respond Factors Hurdling WOT

According to Chart 3 above, all participants agreed that geographic locations were the important factors decreasing willingness of transfer. Two of three participants mentioned others factors might inhibit willingness of transfer such as initial information from organization, social attachment with existing circumstances, unclear transfer path, decreasing in financial, and adaptation in new locations. Whereas at least one participant stated that passion, availability of children, and spouse's career as important factors hurdling the transfer.

The summary of Number of Repetitions in Interviews showing the Importance of the Factors Hurdling WOT can be shown in Chart 4.

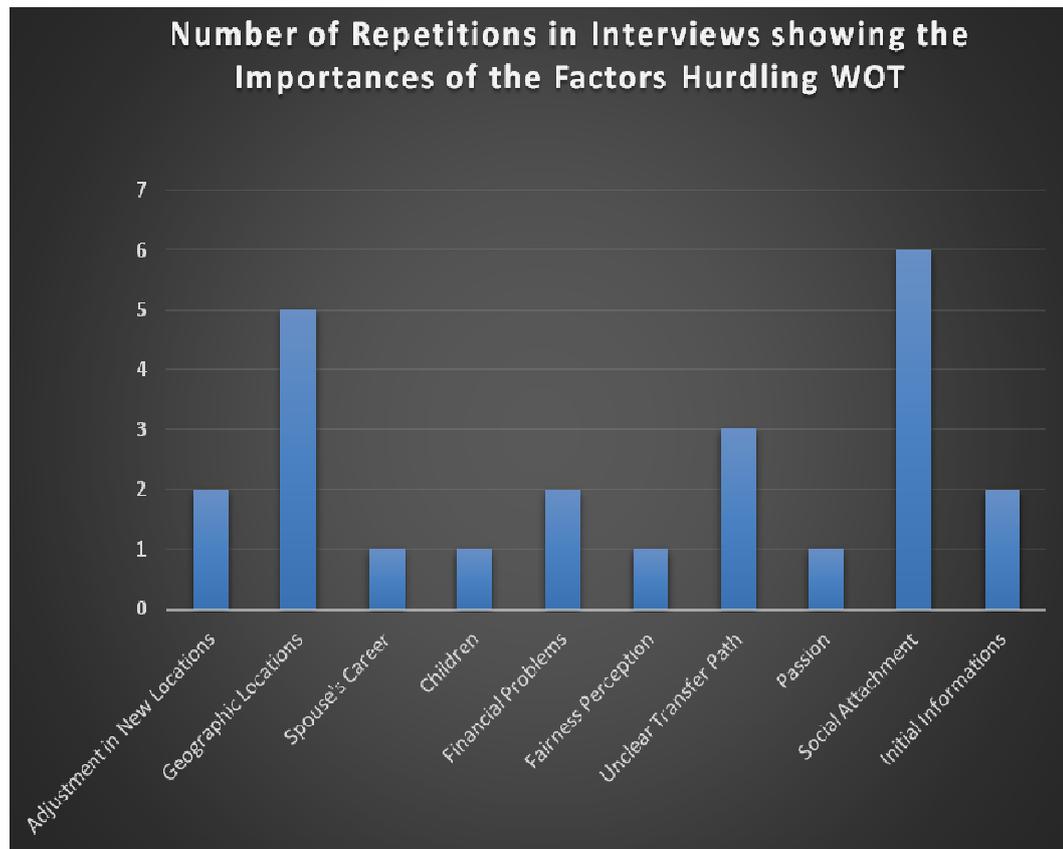


Chart 4. Number of Repetitions in Interviews showing the Importance of the Factors Hurdling WOT

Based on Chart 4, among all factors inhibiting willingness to transfer, Social Attachment had the highest weight with 6 times mentioned in the interviews. Next, Geographic Locations became the second highest factor inhibiting the willingness to transfer. Unclear Transfer Path was the next factor having weight after Geographic Locations. Meanwhile, three factors such as Adjustment in New Locations, Financial Problem, and Initial Information had the same weight. At last, factors having the least weight were Spouse's Career, Children, Fairness Perception, and Passion.

Discussions

Based on propositions made in this research and findings, a comparison was created as shown in Table 1.

Comparison Factors Affecting Willingness to Transfer between Assumptions and Findings		
Propositions	Findings	Note
Career Stage	N/A	Not Identical
Geographic	Geographic Locations	Identical
Spouse's Career	Spouse's Career	Identical
Children	Children	Identical
Organizational Tenure	N/A	Not Identical
Career Satisfaction	N/A	Identical
Career Opportunity	Promotion	Not Identical
Marital Status	N/A	Not Identical
	Transfer Path	New Findings
	Officials Obligation	New Findings
	Common Culture	New Findings
	New Skills and Knowledge	New Findings
	Initial Information	New Findings
	Social Attachment	New Findings
	Passion	New Findings
	Fairness Perception	New Findings
	Financial Problems	New Findings
	Adjustment in New Location	New Findings

Table 1. Comparison Factors Affecting Willingness to Transfer between Assumptions and Findings

Some propositions failed to be confirmed in the interviews. Career Stage, Organizational Tenure, Career Satisfaction, and Marital Status were not proved as factors affecting transfer. However, some factors emerged in the interviews such as Clear and Unclear Transfer Path, Obligation of Officials, Culture, Learning New Skills and Knowledge, Initial Information, Social Attachment, Passion, Fairness Perception, Financial Problems, and Adjustment in New Location.

From the findings, a new local theory regarding factors affecting willingness to transfer can be described as following diagram.

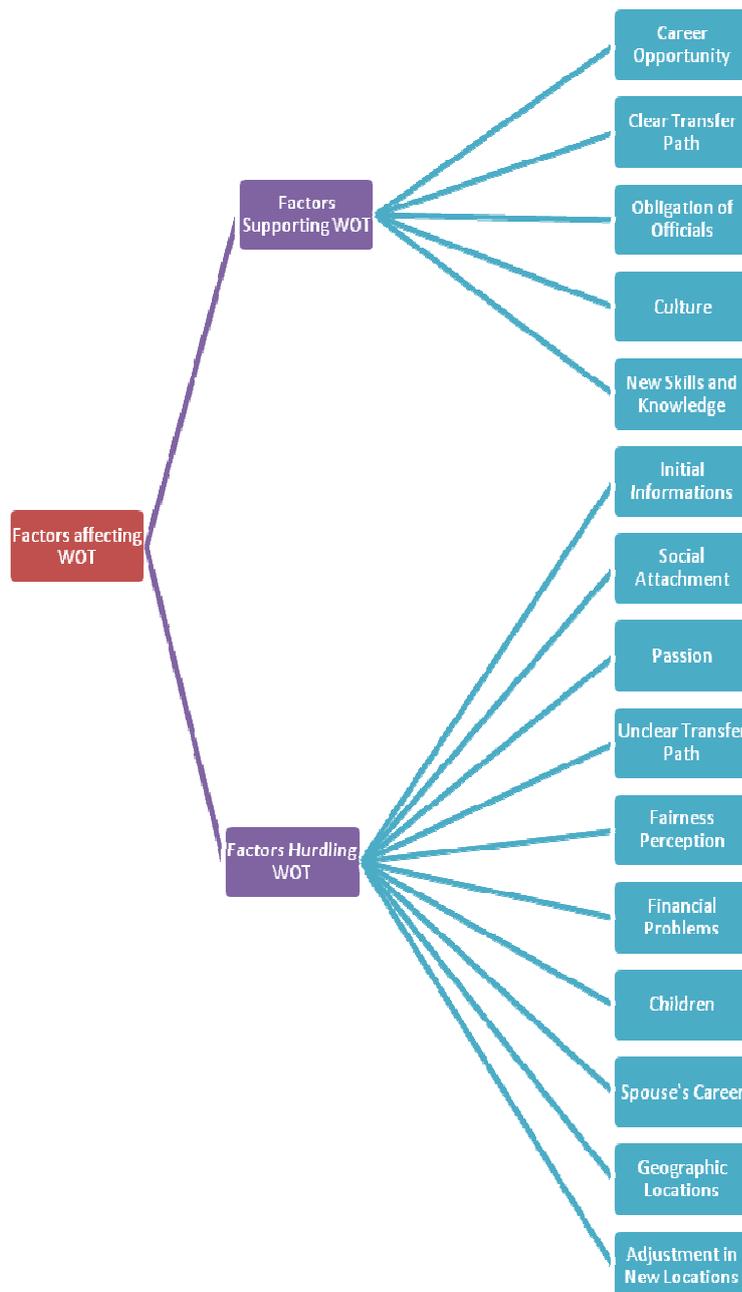


Diagram 2. A new local theory regarding factors affecting willingness to transfer (WOT)

Conclusion

In conclusion, some new factors affecting willingness to transfer emerged in the interview process such as Transfer Pattern, Obligation as Officials, Culture, New Skills and Knowledge, Initial Information, Social Attachment, Passion, Fairness Perception, and Adaptation in new Location. Whereas some propositions were not proved to exist as factor affecting willingness to transfer such as Career Stage, Organizational Tenure, Career Satisfaction, and Marital Status. Some proportions were confirmed available in affecting willingness to transfer are Geographic Location, Spouse's Career, Children, and Career Chance.

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