ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to investigate the impacts of labor migration liberalization in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) on the manufacturing industry of Thailand. The research was conducted because with the recent introduction of the AEC, there has been an increase in international trade between countries, including an increase in movement of labor (migration) between countries. Some industries, including manufacturing and finance, have particularly high levels of demand for skilled labor as well as a high level of intra-ASEAN FDI, indicating a high level of regional international trade. To achieve this aim, a quantitative survey of Thai workers was conducted (n = 400). The study showed that in practice, most workers were not interested in international economic migration. Factors that were associated with the intent to migrate within ASEAN for economic reasons included wages and salaries, career advancement prospects, and to a lesser extent economic conditions and political stability in Thailand. The findings also showed that the AEC was a minor (though significant) influence on intention to migrate, although it was viewed as a major reason for migration into Thailand. The implication of this study is that firms can attract and retain talent by making sure salaries and career prospects are competitive with firms in other countries.