



## Analysis of Labour Migration Tendency of Academic Professionals In Federal Universities In South East, Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

This study focused on the analysis of labour migration tendency of academic professionals in federal universities in South East, Nigeria. It employed the descriptive survey research design. Three research questions guided the study. Sample random sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 609 academic professionals from the area of this study which represents 10% of the total population of 6109 academic professionals in federal universities in south east, Nigeria. A questionnaire titled Labour migration tendency index questionnaire (LMTIQ), which contained 30 items, designed on a 4 point scale and arranged into 3 three clusters, was used as an instrument for data collection for this study. The instrument was validated by three experts who are lecturers in the department of Educational Management and Policy and Measurement and Evaluation in the department of Educational Foundations all in the Faculty of Education, NnamdiAzikiwe University, Awka. Cronbach-alpha was used to test reliability of the instrument which yielded a coefficient value of 0.80. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The findings revealed that the pull factors of high salary packages, improved work environment, staff welfare and social-security benefits, developed physical facility development and flexible employment policies contribute to academic professionals' labour migration tendency. Based on the findings, it was recommended among other things that the government and policy makers and university administrators should reduce instances of the push factors in the system by providing adequate motivational strategies that will encourage academic professionals to stay in this country and develop the university education.

**Keywords:** *Labour migration, Tendency of academic professionals.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Humans by nature have been on the move in quest of overcoming the earth, and to exploit existing resources towards seeking socio-economic opportunities for their wellbeing, this is known as migration. This has resulted in the establishment of formal institutions for human growth and development that have contributed to industrialization and civilization of nations and one of such institutions is the university with its teaming academic professional workforce. However, one of the most important aspects of human resources management in any organization is the ability to recruit, train, manage and retain qualified staff. This is true because of the complexity of human behaviour and the rationale behind individual actions. In recent times scholars say that what makes an employee leave or intends to leave his workplace is a major question for any organization [1]. Labour migration tendency has become a subject of interest for human resources managers because of the changing nature of the society and the demand of labour at this present time. Labour migration has been described by different researchers and authors in different terms such as turnover, attrition, exiting, quitting, etc. Unlike the actual employee turnover or quitting, intention to quit is not explicit in that it is only statements about a specific behaviour of interest and not the actual behavior [2]. However, Bothma and Roodt [3] identify turnover intention as a type of withdrawal behaviour that is associated with under-identification with work. They further assert that labour migration tendency is the employee's conscious and deliberate willingness to leave the organization and it is regarded as the last in a sequence of withdrawal cognitions. Du Plooy and Gert [4] and Morrel, Loan-Clarke and Wilkinson [5] briefly define intention to quit or labour migration tendency as "the employee's conscious and deliberate willfulness to leave the organization. Therefore labour migration tendency is an employee's predetermination to withdraw and leave an organization, not the actual separation from the organization itself. It is also referred to as an individual's perceived probability of staying with or leaving an employing organization. Conditions that necessitate labour migration tendencies are usually pressure, stress, policies of the workplace, unsatisfactory and unmotivated workplace situations. It could also be as a result of administrative or management leadership style, socio-political, economic and environmental conditions of a workplace. When this is the case an employee feels that there is no need to continue to work in his former workplace therefore thoughts and tendencies to leave will be considered. Turnover intentions can result in losses to a firm, through the loss of talented human capital and the possible leakage of firm know-

how to competitors [6]. Also when a worker leaves an organization, there is a loss to the company both economically and in terms of time as all the effort invested in the employee is lost forever. Examples of labour migration costs include opportunity costs, retraining costs, reselection costs and decreased morale among other employees. Labour migration therefore could either be voluntary or involuntary. Voluntary migration is the type that the decision is based on the initiative, desire and the free will of the person influenced by a combination of factors such as economic, political and social: either in the migrants` country of origin (determinant factors or "push factors") or in the country of destination (attraction factors or "pull factors")."Push-pull factors" are the reasons that push or attract people to a particular place. "Push" factors are the negative aspects of the country of origin, often decisive in people's choice to emigrate and the "pull" factors are the positive aspects of different countries that encourage people to emigrate in search of a better life.

Contemporary human resources managers considered it very useful to measure labour migration intention or tendency rather than actual labour migration because one's intention to act can be the immediate determinant of that behaviour [2]. However, migration tendency can be a good proxy for measuring actual migration as the latter can be very difficult to measure. Tuzun and Kalemci [7] explain that many studies show that labour migration tendency is a good predictor of actual labour migration, therefore making it essential for organizations to investigate and understand the reasons behind labour migration tendency and how to control or minimize them. Robyn and Du Preez [8] also explain that the main important reason for investigating an employee's intention to quit in any organization is to assist the human resources personnel take a proactive approach to the organization's retention strategies and try by all means to decrease the migration tendency. For the university, Bushe [9], says that with the growth in global mobility and shifting demographic profiles means now employing and retaining talented and knowledgeable lecturers and researchers. This is an ever-increasing challenge in the face of labour migration tendencies arising from unsatisfactory workplace conditions in our universities.

Labour migration of academic professionals on the other hand is referred to as the movement of an academia leaving his country of origin in search of better job experience in another country and does not return to the country of origin for a long period of time. It is regarded as cross border migration or immigration. To this Ulrich [10], noted that International migration of skilled persons has assumed increased importance in the recent past reflecting the impact of globalization, revival of growth in the world economy and explosive growth in the information and communication technology. Continuing Ulrich says, a number of developed countries have liberalized their policies for admission of highly skilled professionals. All Countries and centers of academic excellence which offer these attractions have received the largest numbers of professional migrants and these have, in turn, made substantial contributions, not only to the economic growth of their host countries but also to the scientific and technological advancement of humanity. The problem lies in that, this demand is largely met by developing countries triggering an exodus of the skilled persons. The situation is not different from the experience of the universities in the South East, Nigeria where majority of the younger academia are constantly leaving the universities and many others are intending to migrate to other countries of the world for a better job experience. Some say that while some amount of mobility is obviously necessary if developing countries are to integrate into the skilled economy. It must be understood that a large outflow of skilled persons because of the work environment poses the threat of a brain-drain which can adversely impact growth and development to the country of origin. Brain-drain according to the national policy of migration [11] occurs when significant numbers of highly skilled nationals leave their country of origin to seek employment or establish businesses abroad. Alagwe, Ankele, Adeleye, and Olaniyi, [12], Observe that global demand for professionals may have reduced the tolls of engineers and professionals in the Nigerian construction Industry causing its shortage. This has a negative effect on the economies of developing countries because the few remaining skills of the nationals will not be sufficient to grow their industries, academia and other sectors of the economy. As much as there is a need for knowledge transfer and cross fertilization of ideas among academic professionals, it should not be to the detriment of the home country or being brought about by an adverse work environment. On the other hand, Ikwuyatum [13], opined that an education system such as that of Nigeria, with limited capacities is one of the push factors for highly skilled immigrants. Therefore, the management of federal universities in South-East, Nigeria should make sure that there are lots of motivational strategies available to staff that will impact on their level of commitment to duty which will bring about a decrease in their labour migration tendencies because the more motivated and satisfied employees are with their jobs, the less likely they are to leave them.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Academic staff of universities are among those regarded to be working in prestigious institutions all over the world and South East, Nigeria included, where it is believed that the government and other stakeholders in education pay more attention because of the prominent place university education occupies in the development of the nation. But more often than not the academic staff of these Federal universities engage the government on issues of needs and unsatisfactory work conditions in universities in South East Nigeria. Most of these universities are lacking in office accommodations and furnishings, lecture halls and other basic learning resources. Some of the academic staff complain of delay in promotions, Earned allowances and other benefits due to them. Right now there seems to be a kind of disconnect between the staff and the government and university management because of perceived insincerity over agreements

reached with the academic staff. All these seem to prove that there are not enough motivational strategies to attract and keep these staff within these universities. Today one of the major problems in these universities is the constant labour migration tendency among the academic staff. Many of the young academic professionals have the intention to leave these universities for an employment opportunity in other countries in Europe, America and other developed countries where there are better employment policies. This is a disturbing phenomenon that requires proper investigation.

It is therefore on this note that the present study was conducted to empirically analyze the issues of labour migration tendency among academic professionals of Federal universities in South East, Nigeria.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study

- a) What are push factors of labour migration tendency among academic professionals of South East universities
- b) What are the pull factors of labour migration tendency among academic professionals of South East universities
- c) What are the strategies adopted to reduce labour migration tendency among academic professionals of South East universities

## METHOD

Descriptive survey design was adopted in this study. In the South East geopolitical zone of Nigeria there are five Federal universities one from each of the states that make up the zone. The population consisted of **6109** academic professionals from the five Federal universities in South East, Nigeria. This comprises 6109 academic staff from the Federal universities in South East, Nigeria. The sample size for this study is 609 academic staff which represents 10% of the total population of 6109 academic professionals from the five Federal universities in the zone. A researcher developed questionnaire titled "Labour migration tendency index questionnaire" (LMTIQ), which contained 30 items, designed on a 4 point scale of Strongly Agree –SA (4), Agree –A (3), Disagree –D (2) and Strongly Disagree –SD (1) and arranged into 3 three clusters, was used as instrument for data collection for this study.

The instrument was validated by three experts who are three lecturers, two from the department of Educational Management and Policy and one from the Measurement and Evaluation in the department of Educational Foundations all in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The instrument was pilot tested on 20 academic staff from Imo State University, Owerri to determine its reliability. Cronbach-alpha was used to calculate the reliability of the instrument which yielded a coefficient value of 0.80. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Any item whose mean score is above the benchmark of 2.50 was regarded as agreed while those items with mean score below the mean benchmark of 2.50 were regarded as disagreed.

## RESULT

Research Question 1:

What are push factors in labour migration tendency among academic professionals of universities in Anambra State

**Table 1.** Push factors in labour migration tendency of academic professionals of universities in Anambra State?

S/N	Items Please indicate the push factors that influencing your migration tendency	X	SD	Decision
1.	Work environment in this university	2.15	0.56	Disagree
2.	Level of availability of digital and ICT learning resources	2.57	0.90	Agree
3.	Non-functional Laboratories and workshops for research	3.01	1.62	Agree
4.	Meagre salary package of academic staff	4.00	1.06	Agree
5.	Government funding policies of universities	2.74	1.01	Agree
6.	Level of security of life and property in this university	2.45	0.92	Disagree

7.	Level of infrastructural development provisions	2.55	0.83	Agree
8.	Issues of promotion and growth pathways	2.16	0.48	Disagree
9.	There are no job fulfillment in working in this university	2.67	1.06	Agree
10.	Staff development programs are rarely granted to staff	3.02	1.09	Agree
<b>Mean of means and standard Deviation</b>		<b>2.73</b>	<b>0.95</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Data presented in table 1 above, revealed that respondents agree on items 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10. This is shown by the mean rating bench mark of 2.5 which the items therein fall above, this implies that respondents agree that pull factors in labour migration tendency of academic professionals of universities include; Level of availability of digital and ICT learning resources, Non-functional Laboratories and workshops for research, Meagre salary package of academic staff, government funding policies of universities, level of infrastructural development provisions, There are no job fulfillment in working in this university, Staff development programs are rarely granted to staff, while respondents disagree on items 1, 6 and 8. This is shown by the mean rating that is below 2.5 mean benchmark. This implies that respondents disagree that the work environment of the university, level of security of life and property in the university and promotion and growth pathways do not constitute push factors of labour migration of academic staff of universities, while the former indicate push factors of labour migration tendency. The mean of means shown to be 2.73 which is above the mean bench mark and the pooled standard deviation scores of 0.95 indicate convergence of their responses implying that their responses are homogenous.

**Table 2.** Pull factors in labour migration tendency of academic professionals of universities in Anambra State?

S/N	Items Please indicate the pull factors that influencing your migration tendency	X	SD	Decision
11.	Very attractive salary package	4.15	1.16	Agree
12.	High technological digital and ICT learning resources	2.87	0.90	Agree
13.	Staff are entitled to social security benefits	3.71	1.42	Agree
14.	Employment policies of universities Overseas are flexible	3.00	1.06	Agree
15.	Government gives technical support to researchers	2.84	1.01	Agree
16.	To be granted political asylum	2.25	0.62	Disagree
17.	To become a renown international academia	2.34	0.43	Disagree
18.	Promotion and growth pathways are faster	2.16	0.48	Disagree

19.	There are job fulfillment working in universities Overseas	3.57	0.86	Agree
20.	To acquire dual citizenship and improved living standard	3.62	1.05	Agree
<b>Mean of means and standard Deviation</b>		<b>3.05</b>	<b>0.90</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Data presented in table 2 above showed that the mean score of the respondents are above the mean score benchmark of 2.5 which indicate that they agree that all very attractive salary package, high technological digital and ICT learning resources, Staff are entitled to social security benefits, employment policies of universities Overseas are flexible, Government gives technical support to researchers, there are job fulfillment working in universities Overseas, to acquire dual citizenship and improved living standard and are pull factors of labour migration tendency among academic professionals of the universities except in items 16, 17 and 18, which showed mean scores that are below the mean score benchmark, it therefore indicates that the respondents disagree that those factors contained in those items do not constitute pull factors. The pooled standard deviation scores of 0.91 which indicates convergence of their responses implying that their responses are homogenous.

**Table: 3.**What are the strategies to be adopted to reduce labour migration tendency among academic professionals of public universities in Anambra State

S/N	Items Please indicate the push factors that influencing your migration tendency	X	SD	Decision
21.	Provision of conducive work environment in the Universities	2.57	0.56	Agree
22.	Review of the salary scale of academic staff	3.70	0.90	Agree
23.	Providing adequate motivational incentives to staff	3.01	1.62	Agree
24.	Encouraging and supporting research discoveries	4.00	1.06	Agree
25.	Government honoring the funding policies of universities	2.74	1.01	Agree
26.	Providing periodic mentorship programs for the staff	2.35	0.92	Disagree
27.	Providing socio-economic security benefits to staff	3.55	0.83	Agree
28.	Building low cost housing scheme for staff	2.36	0.48	Disagree
29.	By granting full autonomy to universities	2.67	1.06	Agree
30.	Job redesign and empowerment training,	2.50	1.09	Agree
<b>Mean of means and standard Deviation</b>		<b>2.95</b>	<b>0.95</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Data presented in table 3, above showed that the mean score of the respondents are above the mean score benchmark of 2.5 which indicate that they agree that provision of conducive work environment in the universities, review of the salary scale of academic staff providing motivational incentives to staff, encouraging and supporting research discoveries Government honoring the funding policies of universities, providing socio-economic security benefits to staff, by granting full autonomy to universities and job redesign and empowerment training are strategies to reduce of labour migration tendency among academic professionals of the universities except in items 26 and 28, which showed mean scores that are below the mean score benchmark, it therefore indicates that the respondents disagree that those factors contained in those items are not reduction factors. The pooled standard deviation scores of 0.95 which indicates convergence of their responses implying that their responses are homogenous.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of the study indicated that push factors of labour migration tendency of academic professionals of universities in the Federal universities in South East, Nigeria include: Level of availability of digital and ICT learning resources, Non-functional Laboratories and workshops for research, Meagre salary package of academic staff, government funding policies of universities, level of infrastructural development provisions, lack of job fulfillment in working in this university, Staff development programs are rarely granted to staff.

For Ikwuyatum [13], corroborate this finding by saying that an education system such as that of Nigeria, with limited capacities for learning and research development is one of the push factors for highly skilled emigrants. These findings further agree with Osakwe [14], opines that attitudes of academic staff are effected, in part, by workplace conditions such as a positive and safe environment, a supportive administration, career progression, commensurate salary, supportive work team, and the appeal of the job itself. Also Anekwe, [15], noted that the situation of things in the country compelled many Nigerians academia to flee to more conducive climes in their effort to eke out a living. Such situation are identified as lack of better employment opportunities and low salaries; political instability in home countries, loss of confidence in their government and future prospects for a better life are all push factors in labour migration. Anyanwu, [16] observed that most of the federal universities in the South East Nigeria are lacking in office accommodations and furnishings, lecture halls and other basic learning resources. Lecturers of these universities are believed to be among the least paid compared with other universities in the world. Nigeria budgetary allocation to education has been below 26% UNSECO recommendation. This finding is not surprising owing to the economic situation in the state universities and in the country at large. The universities in the state are seriously lacking in basic infrastructure and ICT learning resources. This implies that the prospect of every young academia in the state today is to leave the country for a better job experience in another country where a digitized economy is the in thing.

One of the findings of the study revealed that the pull factors of labour migration among academic professionals in the Federal universities in South East, Nigeria are very attractive salary package, high technological digital and ICT learning resources, Staff being entitled to social security benefits, employment policies of universities Overseas are flexible, Government given technical support to researchers, there are job fulfillment working in universities Overseas, to acquire dual citizenship and improved living standard. These findings agree with Alagw, Ankeli, Adeleye, and Apata [12] who indicated that good salary has the highest relative importance index and is ranked 1st as the biggest attraction for migrant workers. Continuing they gathered that there was an external economic pull on the Nigerian Construction Industry as a result of better wages, political stability, social stability, health insurance (social security benefits). Supporting this Aremu [17] asserts that migrants are tempted by significantly higher wages and brighter prospects. Anyanwu [16], opines that as a response to some certain inadequacies in the home country pull factors of labour migration necessitate a cross border movement of academic professions or skilled professionals of various fields in search of better work experience, higher wage, more conducive environment and better conditions of service. By implication academic professionals of different fields look for countries that are economically viable with better government policies to partner with in terms of technical and professional idea exchange. This by implication becomes loss of skilled professionals or brain-drain. For Ikwuyatum [13], further corroborate this finding by saying that, all Countries and centers of academic excellence which offer these attractions have received the largest numbers of professional migrants and these have, in turn, made substantial contributions, not only to the economic growth of their host countries but also to the scientific and technological advancement of humanity. Likewise, Answer.com identified some of the pull factors of labour migration for academic professionals as several legitimate political or economic reasons; peace and security for himself and his family, job satisfaction, education, better pay conditions, a higher standard of living. All these show that in labour migration of academic professionals, most of these factors must be considered in their numbers before any decision can be taken. But in a situation where almost all these situations appear to be at the extreme as is the case within the Federal universities in South East, Nigeria academia may not have any other alternative other than to migrate to a clime that can support his aspirations and fulfillment.

Other findings of this study further showed at the strategies for reduction in labour migration tendency among academic professional are provision of conducive work environment in the universities, review of the salary scale of academic staff, provision of adequate motivational incentives to staff, encouraging and supporting research discoveries Government honoring the funding policies of universities, providing socio-economic security benefits to staff, by granting full autonomy to universities and job redesign and training. This finding is in agreement with Linet, Kipchumba and Amos [19], who identify incentive system, empowerment, treating people as individuals, flexible workplace, redesign jobs training, teamwork, decision making involvement, effective communication, compensation, selection, knowledge management and manpower supply system as labour migration reduction strategies in organizations. Furthermore, Anyanwu, [16] corroborating these findings observed that management of these Federal universities in South East Nigeria have not been able to apply strong motivational strategies that will move staff to higher levels of commitment. As the Federal government has refused to honour the memoranda of agreements reached with Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) over the years on need assessment and revitalization of universities which more often than not have led to series of industrial actions. The Earned allowances and other honouraria accrued to the academic staff are not paid over the years. All these are indicators that these federal universities are lacking in staff motivation and this is impacting on the level of their commitment thus paving way for labour migration tendency. This implies the universities in the state will continue to be lacking in permanent and committed staff which will be impacting on the job productivity profile of the universities. Supporting this finding Adeoye & Fields [20] opine that compensation management affects job satisfaction (motivation,) financial compensation and non-financial compensation affect employees' job satisfaction. This implies that both financial motivation such as salary, regular promotion and other fringe benefits and non-financial motivation such as good working environment, recognition among others are important factors in determining the job satisfaction of the staff.

## **CONCLUSION**

To achieve the mission and objectives of university education in South East Nigeria it largely depends on the efforts of the government and management of these universities in the development of highly motivated human resources. Human resources capital is the most important aspect of any organization and motivation is the key towards attracting the best brains in an organization for a competitive advantage. This is true because no meaningful achievement will be possible without producing high level manpower and workforce who will be able to drive the economy and grow the industries of the nation. Therefore attention must be paid on the level of physical facility development and management issues in these universities. At all times the needed human and material resources should be assessed and evaluated where there is lack of timely provisions. To this effect efforts should gear towards making sure that a proper strategy is developed and built in the system that will counter the pull or attraction factors of labour migration tendency among academic professionals in the Federal universities in South East, Nigeria and ensure retention of academic staff in the universities.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations have been proffered

- a) Government and its agencies as such the National University Commission (NUC) and administrative heads in the universities should ensure that these push factors of labour migration found in the university system such the non-availability of digital and ICT learning resources, Non-functional Laboratories and workshops for research, Meagre salary package of academic staff, government insincere funding policies of universities, low level of infrastructural development provisions are looked into and adequate measures put in place to reducing them.
- b) The government through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in partnership with Civil Society Organizations and other agencies on migration development in the zone should liaise and form an alliance with some development partners on higher education in establishing linkages and knowledge exchange in the development of the universities in the zone. This will attract foreign partners and technocrats and remittances towards the development and improvement in the salaries and welfare of academic professionals in the zone.
- c) ASUU through their national leadership should continue to engage government towards ensuring that the memorandum of agreement signed with government on needs assessment and revitalization of universities and other entitlements of academic staff are honoured. This will motivate and bring fulfillment to the academic staff of the universities, provision of conducive work environment in the universities, review of the salary scale of academic staff, encouraging and supporting research discoveries
- d) Finally universities should be granted full autonomy where they will take discussion on certain issues peculiar to universities such as, labour, employment, payment structure, scholarship, research and other entitlements. All these will bring about higher standards in university education and ensure fulfillment of staff and improvement in the socio-economic status thereby reducing the problem of labour migration.

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