African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.7 (1), August-December, 2022 https://ajemates.org

# PUSH FACTORS AND WORKPLACE MOTIVATION AS CORRELATES OF LABOUR MIGRATION TENDENCY AMONG ACADEMIC STAFF OF UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-EAST, NIGERIA

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***ABSTRACT***

*This Tetfund-sponsored study was required due to the apparent trend of labor migration among Nigerian university academic staff. Therefore, there is an urgent need for research on the push factors of labor migration tendency and workplace motivations university staff in south east Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided this study. This study adopted a correlated research design. The population included 6109 academic staff from five federal universities in southeastern Nigeria. A sample size of 611 was drawn using a proportional stratified random sampling technique. Three instruments were used for data collection, namely, the Work Motivation Scale for University Faculty Staff (WMSASU), the Push Factor Index Questionnaire (PFIQ), and the Labor Mobility Trends Index Questionnaire (LMTIQ). The tools were validated by two experts from the Department of Educational Management and Policy and one from the Department of Measurement and Evaluation, Department of Educational Foundations, both at the Awka Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikwe University. The reliability of the instruments was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients, with alpha coefficients of 0.81, 0.91, and 0.85, respectively. The Pearson product-moment coefficient correlation was used to analyze data and test hypotheses. The results of this study show that there is a very low negative correlation between migration pushers, workplace motivation, and the tendency of academic staff to migrate to work. Among academic staff, there is a significant relationship between migration pushers and job motivation and the tendency to migrate to work. It was concluded that there was a serious lack of motivation among academic staff due to a lack of political will to address the*



AJEMATES

*needs of universities. Moreover, socio-economic and political issues in the country characterized by insecurity and economic downturn are all contributing factors that are paving the way for the labor migration trend. It is recommended that governments, university leadership and other education stakeholders come together to address the labor turnover propensity of academic staff by providing the necessary incentive strategies at universities and taking a stand against insecurity. All of this will restore hope in the system and reduce the tendency for labor migration.*

**Keywords**: Push Factors; workplace Motivation; Labour; Migration Tendency; Academic Staff.

## Introduction

The objectives of higher education in Nigeria as set out in the National Education Policy (FRN, 2014) state, inter alia, the development of individuals through high level relevant training of workers and the promotion of national and international understanding and interaction. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) the extent to which universities are able to achieve these goals is a major concern for all education stakeholders. That's because higher education offers students and staff the highest levels of academic achievement, accreditation and self-realization of any country in the world. It empowers and influences the nation's workforce, preparing citizens for employment and contributing to social development. No country in the world today can do without the development of universities and their conscious contributions to the world. Thus, the spiritual growth of man and the expansion of man's intellect reflect the material development of man's immediate environment, so that the materiality of development is only a reflection of the scale of psychological and intellectual development. This idea emphasizes the importance of education and training as keys to social development. Anyanwu and Emenike (2021) believe that higher education is the center of every country's socio-economic and national development, especially in today's globalized information and knowledge economy, which provides the highly skilled labor force required by the labor market. For this to be possible, the University must be adequately equipped, humanly and materially, to advance and achieve its goals. Human resources, in this case scientific personnel, are the most important resources that other people depend on.

Academic staff are critical to the development of a university's human capital. They are University staff responsible for teaching, research and community development. They also participate in and oversee research development and dissemination of acquired knowledge in order to provide solutions to societal problems. They are experts and savvy people in their respective disciplines. They are lecturers from university staff who are in the ranks of professors, readers, senior lecturers and lecturers 1 and 1 and 11. Others are assistant lecturers, graduate assistants, not including librarians, who are responsible for

AJEMATES

training students for certification at university levels (Anyanwu and Emenike, 2021). In order for employees to work effectively, they must achieve a certain level of job satisfaction that motivates them to do their best work. This, in turn, can seriously affect school climate, job performance, morale, but also student achievement and workforce migration propensity.

However, according to the National Migration Policy (IOM, 2015), migration is the process by which a person moves temporarily or permanently from their primary place of residence to another place in search of a better life, family reunification and education, or other economic reasons. Migration is thus a fundamental part of human nature. The Wikipedia dictionary defines migration as the movement of people from one place to another with the intention of permanently or temporarily settling in a new place (geographical area). Migration is often long-distance, from one country to another, and immigration is often associated with better human capital at the individual and household levels and better access to immigrant networks. People may be forced to relocate (eviction) or voluntarily choose to relocate for a variety of reasons, such as political, economic and socio-religious, health, education, and safety of life and property. Those who are forced to migrate as a result of natural disasters such as Bodden, as we are now in Nigeria, are considered Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), while individuals seeking asylum in another country can do so if they leave their home country The reason is a formal application for asylum in the country of destination due to political, religious or other persecution. If this application is successful, the person becomes a legal refugee.

All countries in the world recognize that immigration is a cross-cutting issue affected by education, health, security, population dynamics, national planning and development, human development, organized labour, foreign direct investment, external relations and other sectors which in turn affect education , health, security, population dynamics and other sectors (IOM, 2015). According to the National Migration Dialogue report (2018), immigration is considered one of the most important drivers of human progress and human dynamism. The report highlights that the 2030 Agenda views migration as a cross-cutting issue relevant to all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). At this stage, human mobility is no longer seen merely as a background to development or a consequence of underdevelopment, but as a part of human life. According to Adepoju (2021), Nigeria, a demographic and economic giant in Africa, is a country with multiple migration configurations, including cross-border mobility, labor migration, irregular migration and human trafficking, internal displacement, and migration of highly skilled workers (labor migrant). Therefore, migration can be internal or external (immigration or emigration). Academic labor migration, on the other hand, is defined as the flow of academics who leave their country of origin to seek better work experience in another country and do not return to their country of

AJEMATES

origin for a long period of time. It is considered cross-border migration or immigration. Ulrich (2015) notes that international migration of skilled workers has become more important recently, reflecting the effects of globalization, a recovery in world economic growth, and the explosion of information and communication technologies.

The trend of workforce migration is a bad sign for an organization and a key HR manager. Therefore, it is imperative to critically question what factors drive employee migration in order to gain a competitive advantage in the labor market of qualified workers. In Nigeria and some other developing countries around the world, it has become the norm that large groups of academic staff immigrate to western countries in search of better work experience. Today, almost all young professionals in Nigeria are considering and looking for opportunities to leave the country. Labor migration can thus be defined as the firm intention of a worker to leave a job and a country because the conditions of a preconceived better intention of working in another country have long been unsatisfactory. Labor migration can be seen from the aspects of resignation, resignation, resignation, resignation, etc. Bothma and Roodt (2012) identified turnover intention as a withdrawal behavior associated with insufficient job identification. They further assert that workforce migration propensity, the conscious and voluntary willingness of employees to leave a company, is seen as the latest in a series of withdrawal perceptions. According to Mxenge, Dywili, and Bazana (2014), the intention to quit smoking is not clear, as only the statements about the specific behavior are interesting, not the actual behavior. Thus, labor migration propensity is defined as workers' conscious and intentional departure or departure from their organization due to insufficient job identification due to an unmotivated work environment. Risk, insecurity, stress, tension, unsatisfactory and unmotivated work, including administrative management styles, socio-political and economic framework conditions, and environmental factors, are all considered as conditions that may contribute to labor force migration propensity.

Contemporary human resources managers find it useful to measure labor migration intentions or trends rather than actual labor migration, as a person's intention to act can be a direct determinant of that behavior (Mxenge, Dywili, and Bazana 2014). Therefore, migration trends can be a good indicator of actual migration. Robyn and Du Preez (2013) state that the reason for studying employee turnover intentions in organizations is to support HR staff to adopt proactive retention strategies and organizations examine brain drain. According to national immigration policies (IOM, 2015), brain drain is said to occur when large numbers of highly qualified nationals leave their countries of origin to seek employment or start businesses abroad. Mahdi, Mohd Zin, Mohd Nor, Skat and Abang (2012) state that what motivates employees to leave or leave is an important

AJEMATES

question for any organization and they are considered as driving factors.

Push factors are a combination of factors such as economic, political, social and environmental factors that are unfavorable in the country/organization of origin and cause people to consider moving jobs to another location. Drivers are negative aspects of a worker's or immigrant's country of origin that often drive immigration decisions. In doing so, consideration should be given to the motivating factors of universities in Nigeria and the southeast, in particular administrative styles, socio-political factors, economic factors and environmental working conditions.

Leadership is an important factor in any organization, it determines the effectiveness of an organization. A university is known as a special place of learning whose culture and climate promote human development. The melody of administration determines the ethos of the university. Nwagwu (2017) describes school climate as the interaction of school members within the context of institutional goals, structure, size, and interpersonal complexity. This is the result of leadership aimed at creating an enabling environment for effective governance, teaching and learning. It is a term used to describe the state of human relationships within the operating environment of an educational institution. This shows in leadership attitude, personality, vision, leadership style and body language. All of this has an overarching impact on the entire school structure. Tableman and Herron (2004) describe school climate as reflecting the physical and psychological aspects of a school that are more susceptible to change and creating the conditions for teaching and learning to occur. It is an enduring characteristic or intrinsic quality of a school that its members experience and that influences their behaviour. This is what distinguishes one school from another. It is also those random positions generated by school management practices that determine members' perceptions and influence their attitudes and behaviours.

In order to achieve the goals of the University, it must work in an atmosphere of order, peace and tranquility, free from undue interference of any kind, and in which management and staff live in harmony. School leaders should work to ensure that schools provide a safe, supportive and orderly environment, free of bullying and intimidation, for day-to-day teaching and learning. Therefore, everything depends on the executive leadership style, management should choose more support and less command, and employees should be more dedicated, tolerant, helpful, respectful, caring, committed, and less frustrated. Or be rigid, inconsiderate, unsupportive, uncommitted, and controlling, and employees become intolerant, disrespectful, frustrated, divisive, and ineffective. This will always create an atmosphere of tension and social tension, making employees unwelcoming and thus a driving factor.

AJEMATES

Most of the time, the internal politics of the university administration affect the smooth running of university programs. Nwadiani, cited in Babalola, Akpa, Ayeni, and Adedeji (2007), states that the goals of education, control, production process variables, finance, and certification systems are closely tied to politics, making it so frustrating that honest efforts have mostly become staffers. Some university presidents have mostly contradicted the requirements of the academic union on the welfare and basic services of the school. Some VCs tend to side with the government, especially on issues of national demand, such as B. Strikes to harass its staff to retain its political appointments, which have serious implications for the university's autonomy. Internal politics in the university environment and governance are the result of external social politics where power reigns supreme, where injustice and justice and merit reign supreme in terms of appointment and entitlement. Most scientific workers today are victims of this injustice and have long carried these wounds in the course of their duties. Of course, there is no way to motivate these people to do well in college. Some other areas of administrative inefficiency lie in poor strategic planning for physical development and a lack of maintenance culture. University leadership must be humane and learn the theory of both soft and hard. Human resource development issues are not adequately considered in most universities. There is no encouragement for younger employees who are looking for opportunities to advance. In the area of decision-making, management tends to be authoritarian rather than participatory.

Another driver for Nigerian scholars is the socio-political and economic landscape. The socio-political and economic situation in Nigeria today is not good for anyone. This situation has seriously affected the academic staff of Nigerian universities. The government of every country has a duty to care about the general welfare and well-being of its citizens by ensuring the safety of life and property. The importance of safety in life cannot be overemphasized. This is achieved by providing critical human and physical infrastructure. But today there are attacks all over the country, there are unsafe places everywhere, people cannot move freely. These insecurities come in various forms and guises, from ethnic militias, agitators and herders who today face daily terrorist attacks from Boko Haram, to various terrorist groups, to the kidnapping of Fulani herders for ransom, to "Identity Caretaker". Critical infrastructure has been attacked in many parts of the country. In all these cases, the then-government seemed to have been taken over by national insecurities. This is the public perception because the government has not taken a convincing or proactive approach to combating these terrorists in society. In today's Southeast, much of education and resource time is wasted every Monday due to "stay at home" orders issued by the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB). In this situation, every monday shops, gymnasiums and schools are closed and most of the time people die in pre-test of house arrest order and the most worrying aspect is

AJEMATES

the kidnapping and murder of innocent Nigerians including businessmen, religious people (pastors) to university lecturers. The list extends to everyone and everyone in society, so everyone is a target. For academia, it is both an enabler and a reducer of the university's mission and goals. Several lecturers have been kidnapped while on duty, and the university and government appear to be working to free them. A country that lacks civic education and defense social security as it is a major player in issues like lack of patriotism. The political class building security around them, driving around in armored and bulletproof security vehicles while sacrificing their subjects in terrorist attacks leaves a lot to be desired.

The economic situation in these countries has a great impact on civil servants, and the salaries of civil servants have not changed for a long time. The government continues to pay lip service to raising wages and minimum wages. This has prompted academic staff at the Union of Universities (ASUU) to draw the government's attention to renegotiating the 2009 agreement, ways to revitalize universities, the provision of university infrastructure, institutional access, and creating transparent accountability, among other issues. University Transparent Accountability Solutions (UTAS) instead of IPPIS, i.e. not capturing the characteristics of university academic staff, are reviewed every 4 years to reflect current economic realities. Despite several backlogs at ASUU, the government has yet to honor the agreement. This led to an eight-month labor dispute (strike) initiated by the union on February 14, 2022 and running until October 14, 2022. Needless to say, the Nigerian government has been dishonest about education and this has had an impact on the output of universities. Eight months of strikes have been a failure for the government, universities, students and the country as a whole. A sober government would be content for a short while to accept the approval of its appointed committee, but that is the way it is. This has discouraged many young academics who are now considering other options, so many have left the country in droves for other parts of the world where education is considered very important and appropriate motivational strategies in the workplace are a priority.

Motivation can be viewed as the ability to initiate, motivate, influence, and motivate employees to meet personal and collaborative needs through compensation, motivation, job enrichment, and other workplace benefits, resulting in greater job satisfaction and fulfillment. The word motivation comes from the concept of motivation, which describes the drives and needs an individual needs to achieve a particular desire (Chaudhary and Sharma, 2012). For Keller and Price (2011), workplace motivation refers to the existential zest that drives employees to exert extraordinary effort toward achieving results. For Onyali and Nnebedum (2016), motivation is the motivating factor for employee performance, which guides and guides employee behavior for optimal performance. Thus, the concept of motivation emphasizes a person's enthusiasm and concern for being able to effectively achieve



AJEMATES

a goal. It is seen as a management practice in the workplace that exerts a powerful influence on employees, causing them to exert great efforts towards achieving the goals of the organization. Sawicki (2016) argues that motivation affects employees and makes them more productive by shaping the attitudes and behaviors required by the organization, which will have a real impact on the implementation of organizational assumptions. Motivation has two aspects, intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation.

Motivational tools in the workplace are viewed as a collection of resources that can meet the needs of employees and thus increase their engagement with work. They represent tangible (financial) and intangible (non-financial) reasons for working. Material motivation is the total financial and non-financial gain from work done. Forson (2012) showed that appropriate employee incentives are one of the best ways to achieve organizational goals or missions with the least expenditure of resources and available human capital. On the other hand, certain issues can arise in the absence of motivation as they affect certain employees who come to the workplace with different expectations, behaviors and attitudes and who have less loyalty to the organization. Linet, Kipchumba, and Amos (2014) identified incentive systems, empowerment, viewing people as individuals, flexible workplaces, workplace redesign, training, teamwork, participatory decision-making, effective communication, compensation, choice, knowledge management , and human resource supply system. All these can be considered as those factors, ways, means and methods used by management or built into the organization to motivate and motivate employees to do their best and develop their capabilities within the organization. Simply put, motivation in an organization is management's ability to stimulate employees' emotions by massaging their ego to perform their duties optimally, and it will only lead to employee performance when university management understands and uses incentives correctly. The role of university leaders is to achieve the goals of the organization through its members. It is management's responsibility to find out what motivates people to achieve company goals and improve performance. People are different and have different needs, interests and desires; each employee has their own drives and incentives. Understanding these motivators enables managers to develop appropriate strategies to drive employees forward and adjust their behavior to successfully achieve company goals and employees' personal goals. Employers have a responsibility to provide the resources, opportunities, recognition and a cohesive work environment in which employees can succeed. This means that, in order to motivate employees, managers must learn how to influence their behavior in order to make them want to work. It has been observed that people's motivation depends on the force that drives them, which can be a need, a drive, or an impulse. It is well known that human needs are infinite and incomplete, but only high-level needs or motivations lead to action. According to Maslow's hierarchy of

AJEMATES

needs, a person may crave physical, safety, social, esteem, or self-actualization needs at any given time, but the strongest needs lead to action. Motives, once satisfied, become needs. Managers have a responsibility to understand how to increase the strength of specific motivations in order to promote productivity and industrial harmony.

Incentives are therefore a top priority and strategy for university management. Developing organizational strategies to motivate university faculty becomes the main goal of organizational management to improve organizational performance. Motivation is a requirement for university organizational performance. Workplace incentive strategies to consider in college are terms of service, staff development practices, infrastructure development arrangements and reward systems. In order for employees to deliver the products expected of their educational system and perform their duties adequately, they must work within the appropriate organizational environment.

Instead, there appears to be a disconnection between academic staff and government when it comes to staff benefits and needs. Federal universities in southeastern Nigeria lack infrastructure and other basic learning resources. Faculty at these universities are among the lowest paid compared to other universities in the world, as Nigeria's education budget allocation does not meet UNESCO's recommended 26 percent. The absence of some basic incentives in the workplace indicates a lack of motivation. Since 2009, the federal government has been unable to honor and enforce a number of agreements with the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) to assess needs and revitalize universities, often leading to a series of labor disputes. Study stipends and other fees to which academic staff are entitled are not paid on a regular basis. All this points to a lack of employee motivation in federal universities in southeastern Nigeria, which is affecting their engagement, thus paving the way for the trend of labor migration. Today, most young Nigerian professionals prefer and seek employment in other countries around the world with better employment policies, flexible working conditions and improved infrastructure development. Anekwe (2013) found that Nigeria has lost 10,694 higher education professionals in the past 20 years alone; an estimated 30,000 workers overall, including those who have left public, industrial and private organizations due to the country's economic situation.

From the fore going it quite understandable that there are lots of factors that are impacting on academic staff and the university education in South East, Nigeria that require urgent attention in order to counter labour migration tendency of academic staff. It on this ground that they researchers have decided to carry out this study on push factors and workplace motivation as correlates of labour migration tendency of academic staff of universities in South East, Nigeria.

AJEMATES

**Statement of the Problem**

Scholars around the world are considered intellectuals and belong to a high social status in society. In carrying out their University duties, they have contributed to critical development and nation-building. But today, there are signs that federal universities in southeastern Nigeria are on the verge of collapse, as university academic staff appear to be marginalized by the government, its institutions and ministries, and labor migration appears to be the order of the day. This lack of sincerity is evident in the implementation of policies and agreements with the University Academic Staff Union (ASUU) on needs assessment and university revitalization and renegotiation of overdue terms of service. The effects of all of this lead to ongoing labor disputes, disruption of academic programs, low employee productivity, willful absenteeism, brain drain, apathy and poor job performance. The socio-political and economic landscape of the country continues to pose a major threat to the survival of all. The fear of kidnapping, banditry and terrorist attacks in the country, combined with poor economic conditions, has all academic staff looking at each other. Authoritarian style of executive leadership, domestic politics and infighting, injustice, wrongful appointments, and victimization of academic staff have all been experienced in most universities. All of this is more depressing than encouraging. In this sense, it is regrettable that among many young academic staff, there is a clear trend of labor migration, shifting to developed countries such as Europe and the United States with better employment policies and social security. It's a disturbing scene that deserves a thorough investigation. In this context, this study aims to empirically determine whether push factors and work motivation are associated with the labor force migration propensity of university academic staff in southeastern Nigeria.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study

1 What is the relationship between the mean scores of workplace motivation and labour migration tendency of academic staff universities in South-East, Nigeria?
2 What is the relationship between the mean scores of push factors and labour migration tendency of academic staff of universities in South-East, Nigeria

**Hypotheses**

The following two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. There will be no significant correlation between the mean scores of workplace motivation and labour migration tendency of academic staff of universities in South-East, Nigeria.
2. There will be no significant correlation between the mean scores of push factors and labour migration tendency of academic staff of universities in South-East, Nigeria

**Research Method**

A relevant research design was chosen for this study. The Southeast Nigeria



AJEMATES

geopolitical region consists of five states, namely Abia, Anambra, Eboni, Enugu and Imo, each of which has a federal university. The academic staff at 11 levels from Professor to Lecturer includes 6109 people from five federal universities in southeastern Nigeria. The sample size for this study was 611 academic staff, representing 13% of the total population. The three sets of instruments such as "Workplace Motivation Scale for Academic Staff of University" (WMSASU), Push Factor Index Questionnaire (PFIQ)" and "Labour Migration Tendency Index Questionnaire (LMTIQ)" were developed for data collection. The Workplace Motivation Scale for University Staff (WMSASU) consists of 20 items. The push factor Index questionnaire has 15 items, while the Labor Migration Tendency questionnaire has 15 items. They were rated on a 4-point scale of "Strongly Agree - SA" (4), "Agree - A (3)", "Disagree - D" (2) and "Strongly Disagree - SD (1)".

The tools were validated by three experts, two from the Department of Educational Management and Policy and one from the Department of Educational Foundations in Measurement and Evaluation, all at the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The instruments were tested on 20 academic staff at the Imo State University of Owerri to determine their reliability. Cronbach's alpha was used to calculate the reliability of the instrument, with a coefficient value of 0.81 for the job motivators index, 0.91 and 0.85 for the enablers index and labor migration trend index. The researchers, with the help of two research assistants, distributed 611 questionnaires to academic staff at the university, and 595 were returned for data analysis, a response rate of 98%. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was used to analyze the data, and the coefficient (r) and the magnitude of the relationship are explained using the interpretation of the correlation coefficient as follows:

:

| Coefficient (r) | | | Relationship |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0.00 | to | 0.19 | Very Low |
| 0.20 | to | 0.39 | Low |
| 0.40 | to | 0.59 | Moderate |
| 0.60 | to | 0.79 | High |
| 0.80 | to | 1.00 | Very high |

The hypotheses were tested using Pearson's Product Moment correlation coefficient. A null hypothesis was rejected where p-value was less than the significant value of 0.05; otherwise the null hypothesis was being accepted. All analyses were computed using



AJEMATES

SPSS Computer Software Package Version 17.

**Presentation of Results**

**Research Question 1:** What is the relationship between the mean scores of workplace motivation and labour migration tendency of academic Staff of universities in South East, Nigeria?

**Table 1: Pearson r on the Correlation between Motivational Factors and Labour Migration Tendencies of Academic Staff of South East Universities**

| Source of Variation | N | R | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|
| Motivational Factors<br><br>Migration Tendency | 596 | 0.180 | Very low negative Relationship |

Table 1 shows that there is a very low negative relationship between the mean score of workplace motivation scores and labour migration tendency of academic Staff of universities in South East, Nigeria. This is evident by the size of Pearson's Correlation Coefficient r, which is 0.180.

**Research Question 2:** What is the relationship between the mean scores of push factors and labour migration tendency of academic Staff of universities in South East Nigeria?

**Table 2: Pearson r on the Correlation between push Factors and Labour Migration Tendencies of Academic Staff of South East Universities**

| Source of Variation | N | R | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|
| Push Factors index<br><br>Migration Tendency | 596 | 0.350 | Low Negative Relationship |

Table 2 shows that the Pearson's r=0.350, indicating that there is a low negative relationship between the push factors index scores and labour migration tendency academic Staff of Universities South East, Nigeria.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant correlation between the mean scores of workplace motivation and labour migration



AJEMATES

tendency of academic Staff of universities in South East.

**Table 3: Test of Significance of Pearson Workplace Motivation and Labour Migration Tendency of Academic Staff of universities in South East.**

| Source of Variation | N | R | p-value | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Motivational Factors<br>Labour Migration Tendency | 596 | 0.918 | 0.00 | Sig |

Analysis in Table 3 shows that there is a significant correlation between the mean motivation scores and labour migration tendency of academic staff of universities in South East. The calculated r (0.918) had *P*.value <0.05. The 1st null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant correlation between the mean scores of push factors and labour migration tendency of academic staff of universities in South East.

**Table 4: Test of Significance of Pearson Push Factors and Labour Migration Tendency of Academic Staff of Universities in South East.**

| Source of Variation | N | R | p-value | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Push Factors<br>Labour Migration Tendency | 596 | 0.963 | 0.00 | Sig |

Analysis in Table 4 shows that there is a significant correlation between the mean push factor scores and labour migration tendency of academic staff of universities in South East. The calculated r (0.963) had *P*.value <0.05. The 2nd null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

**Discussion of Findings**

The results of motivation and labor migration analysis in Table 1 show that there is a significant negative correlation between academic staff's job motivation and labor migration propensity. This means that scientific researchers are not motivated and thus prone to labor turnover. This finding is consistent with Osakwe (2014), who argues that motivation in the workplace can improve



AJEMATES

employee performance and the achievement of organizational goals. Also consistent with this finding, Ihueze, Unachukwu and Onyali (2018) argue that motivators such as good salary, good working conditions, quick and regular promotion, recognition and feedback can increase job security/fulfillment, professional development and authority, as well as a good work environment, challenging and diverse work, shared decision-making and research funding are motivating factors in the workplace. However, Akpotu & Nwadiani (2003) refuted this finding and reported that due to the virtual and global relevance of academic staff positions, they tend to be highly mobile and not intimidated by intrinsic motivators, but rather by global relevance challenging work. Respondents agreed that their universities did not have enough motivators, and thus had a very low negative correlation with labor migration trends. This means that if universities lack work incentives, the trend of labor mobility in academia must continue to decline. This was very evident during the ASUU strike, which began on February 14, 2022 and continued until October 18, 2022 (8 months), their wages were withheld and the federal government forced the union to end the strike cancellation through a court order.

The results of the significance tests in Table 3 corroborate this finding, showing a significant association between the average work motivation score and the labor migration propensity of university faculty members in the Southeast. This may be due to the fact that SFU researchers are not motivated in their universities and thus the trend of labor migration is increasing. With insufficient strategies in place to motivate them to work, the tendency of workforce migration is very strong in the minds and ideas of employees. The trend of labor migration will continue.

The analysis results in Table 2 show that the index value of the driving factors has a low negative correlation with the labor force migration tendency of university faculty and staff in southeastern Nigeria. Sociopolitical and economic factors were identified, in addition to other drivers of labor migration. Chief among these factors today is the insecurity of the lives and property of academic staff. Banditry, kidnapping, and terrorism in Nigeria, coupled with a tough economic environment, has resulted in a geographic progression of the issue of labor migration trends for university academic staff. This result is consistent with Mistura, Adebayo, Kabir, Motunrayo, and Mutiat (2019) in their observations that geographic mobility of the labor force increases, especially in professional academic personnel, it is often more associated with brain drain than with job characteristics. In a country where the government, its institutions, and the political class are indifferent to university education, the country will struggle to build a strong workforce willing to work and contribute to the country's development. Their best minds are found outside of their country, and they are experts and resourceful assets in the target country. Not to mention the internal politics of the university, where injustice, favoritism, victimization, witch hunts and arguments



AJEMATES

against justice, harmony, teamwork and synergy are rife in the system. This finding is corroborated by Osakwe (2014), who argues that the recruitment of academic staff is partly driven by the work environment, such as a positive and safe environment, supportive management, career development, and decent salaries, supportive jobs Attractiveness of the team as well as the job itself. As shown by the results, workforce migration caused by these perceived drivers, Adam and Gert (2017) claim that it is not an indicator of job rejection but rather of the organizational environment. Because labor immigration does not mean rejection of academic jobs, but rejection of the working environment. This may be due to the historical nature of the academic environment in which staff members are no longer granted the professional autonomy of their positions. Ghebru, Mulubrhan, George, and Adebayo (2018) claim that labor mobility through immigration has been identified as one of the pathways out of poverty for poor people in developing countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), regardless of previous work experience.

The results of the significance test in Table 4 corroborate this finding, showing a significant association between the average enabler index score and labor mobility trends among university academic staff in the Southeast. The outcome is a true test of Nigeria's larger social reality. Today, most Nigerians are afraid to go about their legitimate business without fear of these aforementioned horror factors. These push factors further add to the labor migration trend of most university faculty in southeastern Nigeria.

## Conclusion

The goals of higher education can only be achieved in an environment where academic staff are recognized as powerful stakeholders. To this end, factors that lead to lack of job identification, intentional absenteeism, withdrawal tendencies, resignation, and resignation of scientific researchers should be considered emphatically. Labor migration is a bad sign in any organization because it has many effects. Government and university management have a responsibility to work together to address the trend of workforce migration in the university system by ensuring that reasonable accommodations are in place to provide a robust work environment for all university staff. In other words, the effectiveness of academic staff is largely determined by a favorable working environment, validation of salary structures, availability of physical facilities and learning resources, opportunities for career development, university autonomy, staff professional development, and employment security, motivation among others. The dispositions, attitudes, feelings and emotions of scientific researchers towards their work play a crucial role in determining their performance, productivity and behaviour. The impact of the enablers is real and is seriously affecting the lives, decisions and attitudes of all academic staff. Economic indicators such as poverty, recession and



AJEMATES

hunger, and underemployment are serious factors affecting national development and patriotism, and academia has no choice but to choose labor mobility. The growth and development of universities in Nigeria, especially in the South East, will be threatened unless policies and programs are put in place that encourage talent circulation rather than brain drain. This can be achieved through the engagement of Nigerian academics in the diaspora, providing opportunities for knowledge sharing and networking between institutions in home countries and developed countries, thereby reducing the ongoing trend of labor migration.

**Recommendations**

1. The government urgently needs to develop Southeast Universities in terms of academic content, quality and prospects, mobilize all necessary resources, and ensure better university input and output.

2. Strengthen the power of the security sector and take proactive measures to firmly address social issues such as security, banditry, terrorist attacks and economic emergencies, which is one of the major issues of labor migration for all institutions in Nigeria.

3. University administrators should complement government efforts by ensuring that their universities' financial allocations and internally generated revenue are used wisely to provide needed educational services and avoid unnecessary politics of all kinds.

4. The academic staff of the University shall, in the discharge of their duties, be patriotic and willing to serve the government in areas of need and welfare for the good and purposeful realization of the educational goals of the University, without regard to labor migration.

5. Other education stakeholders, especially diaspora philanthropists and qualified professionals in various fields, should take advantage of their huge remittances for the development of higher education in South East Nigeria, through endowment funds, programs and policies, and to support higher education in the region by partnerships with other foreign nationals.

**Consent:** As per as international standard or University standard, respondents written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

**Acknowledgments**

The researchers are grateful to the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (Tetfund) for approving this research work and for their timely release of fund for the execution of this research. Also the university management and the bursary department are highly appreciated for monitoring and supervising this research work. The respondents from the various federal universities and the authors whose

AJEMATES

works were consulted in the course of this research are not left out.

**Competing Interests:** Authors have declared that there is no competing interests existing herein

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