International Mobility of Labour and Economic Development of Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of international mobility of labour on the development of Nigeria. Two null hypotheses were postulated to guide this study and structured questionnaire was used to generate the data required for the analysis. Simple percentages and means was use in analyzing the data collected and the result revealed that there is a significant relationship between the international labour migration dimension and the measures of economic development. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made amongst others.

Keywords: *International Labour Migration; Economic Development; Remittance; Gross National Product.*

1.0 Introduction

Background of the Study

Labor or worker mobility is the geographical and occupational movement of workers. Worker mobility is best gauged by the lack of impediments to such mobility. Impediments to mobility are easily divided into two distinct classes with one being personal and the other being systemic. Personal impediments include physical location, and physical and mental ability. The systemic impediments include educational opportunities as well as various laws and political contrivances and even barriers and hurdles arising from historical happenstance (Borjas, Grogger & Hanson, 2011). Increasing and maintaining a high level of labor mobility allows a more efficient allocation of resources. Labor mobility has proven to be a forceful driver of innovations

International labor mobility is the movement of workers between countries. It is an example of an international factor movement. The movement of laborers is based on a difference in resources between countries. According to economists, over time the migration of labor should have an equalizing effect on wages, with workers in the same industries garnering the same wage (Dustmann, Frattini & Preston, 2013).

Evidence from extent literature reveals that the issue of international migration is a global phenomenon. In virtually every country in the world, there are numerous restrictions in the movement of people across national borders. It is estimated that about 200 million people out of the total world's population, reside in countries where they were not given birth to (Pelham & Torres, 2008).

High-skilled migrants are usually desperate and willing to pay thousands of dollars in legal expenses just to fast tracts the immigration process to their destination choice countries, suffice to mention that several other workers usually migrate illegally through constituted borders thus risking deportation, imprisonment and even death in extreme cases.

These migrant are willing and happy to bear these risks and cost of migrating especially to the developed countries because of the associated economic benefits, compared to the wage benefits or earning opportunities available to them in their destination countries are usually quote enormous. Clements, Montenegro and Pritchett (2008) in their study estimated the gains accruing to a moderately skilled worker in a typical developing country who relocates to the United States at 10,000 dollars per year which is approximately double per capita income in the average developing country.

The enormous wage gain available to these migrants reflects the numerous benefits in terms of productivity which their labour enjoys in developed countries where capital is more abundant and institutional quality is much higher. Klein and Ventura (2007) in their empirical investigation on eliminating barriers to international labour mobility, suggested that eliminating such barriers would increase global wealth by between 50 and 150 percent of World Gross Domestic Products.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Even though, it is generally agreed by economists that the free movement of human resources across countries would automatically enhance welfare globally, the economic effect of this international labour mobility for various sub-populations of the world (particularly, local workers in these countries where the migrants move to as well as citizens that are lift behind in the countries where the migrants departs from) are subjects of underlying controversies. It is an undisputable fact that the free movement of labour across international boundaries would not doubt improve on global efficiency which is in agreement with the principle of comparative advantage, however, the distributed consequences of such movement may be detrimental to the economic development of the native countries of the migrants. This study therefore is aimed at examining international mobility of labour and its effects on the economic development of Nigeria.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to ascertain the effect of international mobility of labour on the development of Nigeria. The specific objectives include;

a) To examine the impact of international mobility of labour on remittance from abroad
b) To determine the effect of international mobility of labour on gross national products of Nigeria.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Issues

2.1.1 Neoclassical Theory of Migration: Macro and Micro Framework

The neoclassical theory understands migration to be driven by differences in returns to labor across markets. The most basic model originally developed to explain migration in the process of economic development in the works of Hicks (1932), Lewis (1954) and Harris and Todaro (1970) highlights that migration results from actual wage differentials across markets or countries that emerge from heterogeneous degrees of labor market tightness. According to this theory, migration is driven by geographic differences in labor supply and demand and the resulting differentials in wages between labor-rich versus capital-rich countries. The central argument of the neoclassical approach thus concentrates on wages. Under the assumption of full employment, it predicts a linear relationship between wage differentials and migration flows (Bauer & Zimmermann, 1999; Massey et al., 1993; Borjas, 2008).

2.1.2 New Economics Theory of Migration

The new economics of migration (NEM) theory has come to challenge some of the assumptions of the neoclassical approach, offering a new level of analysis and different nature of migration determinants and it shifted the focus of migration research from individual independence to mutual interdependence (Stark 1991). The key argument is that migration decisions are not made by isolated individual actors but typically by families or households. Further, the decisions of migrants are influenced by a comprehensive set of factors which are shaped by conditions in the home country. As such, migrant decisions are not based purely on individual utility-maximizing calculations but are rather a household response to both income risk and to the failures of a variety of markets – labor market, credit market, or insurance market (Massey et al., 1993). Hence, migration in the absence of meaningful wage differentials or the absence of migration in the presence of wage differentials does not imply irrationality but rather compels us to consider a set of other variables related to relative and risk-aversion and risk-minimization of household income (Stark 1991; Stark 2003).

2.1.3 World Systems Theory

Historical-structural approaches to migration introduce very different concepts into understanding migration processes. Building on Wallerstein (1974), the world system theory links the determinants of migration to structural change in world markets and views migration as a function of globalization, the increased interdependence of economies and the emergence of new forms of production (Massey et al., 1993; Sassen 1988; Skeldon 1997; Silver 2003). The expansion of export manufacturing and export agriculture linked strongly to foreign direct investment flows from advanced economies to semi-developed or emerging economies has led to a disruption in traditional work structures and has mobilized new population segments into regional as well as long-distance migration. Capital mobility is hence a crucial factor for the world system theorists.

The theory presents capital and labor mobility as interconnected and as two sides of one coin. While migration is a natural outgrowth of the disruptions and dislocations that inevitably occur in capitalist development and can be observed historically, the theory also brings in global political and economic inequalities. Historical-structural approaches deny that individuals truly have free choice in making migration decisions and present them in more deterministic forms, as pressured into movement as an outcome of broader structural processes (de Haas, 2008).

2.1.4 Dual Labour Market Theory

Dual labor market theory, like world system theory, links migration to structural changes in the economy but explains migration dynamics with the demand side (Massey et al, 1993).

Developed by Piore (1979), dual labor market theory posits a bifurcated occupational structure and a dual pattern of economic organization in advanced economies. Duality unfolds along the lines of two types of organization in the economy, namely capital-intensive where both skilled and unskilled labor is utilized, and labor intensive where unskilled labor prevails. The theory argues that migration is driven by conditions of labor demand rather than supply: the character of the economy in advanced countries creates a demand for low-skilled jobs which domestic workers refuse to take up due to, for example, status. As immigration becomes desirable and necessary to fill the jobs, policy choices in the form of active recruitment efforts follow the needs of the market. The theory excludes sending countries and overemphasizes formal recruitment practices. It is unable to account for differential immigration rates in countries with similar economic structures. Empirical estimates are contingent on the distinction between primary and secondary sector, which is usually arbitrary, and therefore can lead to instable results. On the other hand, it provides an intelligent explanation for the coexistence of chronic labor demand for foreign nationals alongside structural unemployment in receiving countries (Arango, 2000).

2.1.5 Network Concepts – Perpetuation of Migration

The network theory of migration does not look at the determinants which initiate migration but rather at what perpetuates migration in time and space (Massey et al., 1993). Migrant networks which often evolve into institutional frameworks help to explain why migration continues even when wage differentials or recruitment policies cease to exist. The existence of a diaspora or networks is likely to influence the decisions of migrants when they choose their destinations (Vertovec, 2002; Dustmann & Glitz, 2005). The network theory also helps to explain the reasons why migration patterns are not evenly distributed across countries, but rather how they tend to form so-called migration regimes (Faist, 2000). Network theory is closely affiliated to another approach known as migration systems theory, pioneered by Magobunje (1970). This theory's main assumption posits that migration alters the social, cultural, economic, and institutional conditions at both the sending and receiving ends and that it forms an entire developmental space within which migration processes operate (de Haas, 2009b).

This study therefore is anchored on the New Economics Theory of Migration and the Dual Labour Market Theory.

2.2 Conceptual Issues

2.2.1 Concept of International Mobility of Labour

Moving people from place to place for living or working purposes is referred to as migration (Huzdik, 2014, UN 2016b). As per the UN (2016a), international mobility of labour at present has become a global phenomenon where its complexity and impacts are largely felt. When analyzed from the development perspective of a country, international mobility of labour has both its advantages and disadvantages. It is argued that migration is a positive force for development since it facilitates development for the receiving country, as the country is able to obtain the required knowledge, expertise and services of skilled and unskilled labour.

However, the receiving country may also suffer due to unwelcome migrants moving into the country as refugees. On the other hand, the sending country may suffer from brain drain due to the heavy outflow of skilled labour, despite the receipt of remittances. Economic and political factors, family re-unification and natural disasters sometimes cause migration to happen. In relation to the present global setup, it can be observed that internal and external conflicts of sovereign states compel people to leave such countries. The best example would be the moving of people from Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria due to civil wars. On the other hand, poverty and lack of decent jobs have become reasons for leaving countries, which is considered as economic migration. This is often seen in inter-country migration, especially in migration from developing countries to developed countries.

There is a global tendency for people of developing countries to move to developed countries in search of more comfortable lives. Further, more travel options and a speedier flow of information have made migration easier to happen around the world. Migration therefore has emerged as a major demographic force throughout the world in the past few decades, especially with globalization.

It was estimated in 2015 that the total number of migrants in the world is 244 million which is 3.3 per cent of the total world population (UN, 2016b). Europe, East and West Asia stood on top as the most popular migrant destinations. In 2015, the total migrant population in Europe was estimated at 76 million and in Asia, it was 75 million (UN, 2016b). The United States of America hosted international migrants totaling 47 million, which was the largest number hosted by an individual country.

Northern America became the country hosting the third largest number of international migrants, which amounted to 54 million (UN, 2016b). When examining the countries of origin of international migrants, it may be observed that Asia accounted for the highest number amounting to 104 million (UN, 2016b), which was 43 per cent of the total international migrant population in 2015. Europe was in the second place having 62 million migrant origins, while Latin America and Caribbean were in the third place having 37 million migrant origins in 2015. India accounted for the largest diaspora2 in the world amounting to 16 million, and Mexico accounted for 12 million of migrant origins (UN, 2016b).

2.2.2 Concept of Economic Development

Economic development is the process in which a nation is being improved in the sector of the economic, political, and social well-being of its people. The term has been used frequently by economists, politicians, and others in the 20th and 21st centuries. The concept, however, has been in existence in the West for centuries. "Modernization, "westernization", and especially "industrialization" are other terms often used while discussing economic development. Economic development has a direct relationship with the environment and environmental issues. Economic development is very often confused with industrial development, even in some academic sources.

Whereas economic development is a policy intervention endeavor with aims of improving the economic and social well-being of people, economic growth is a phenomenon of market productivity and rise in GDP (Mba & Ekeopara, 2012). Consequently, as economist AmartyaSen points out, "economic growth is one aspect of the process of economic development".

The scope of economic development includes the process and policies by which a nation improves the economic, political, and social well-being of its people. The University of Iowa's Center for International Finance and Development states that: 'Economic development' is a term that economists, politicians, and others have used frequently in the 20th century. The concept, however, has been in existence in the West for centuries.

Modernization, Westernization, and especially Industrialization are other terms people have used while discussing economic development. Economic development has a direct relationship with the environment.Although nobody is certain when the concept originated, some people agree that development is closely bound up with the evolution of capitalism and the demise of feudalism (Emeghara, 2013).

Mansell and When also state that economic development has been understood since the World War II to involve economic growth, namely the increases in per capita income, and (if currently absent) the attainment of a standard of living equivalent to that of industrialized countries. Economic development can also be considered as a static theory that documents the state of an economy at a certain time. According to Schumpeter and Backhaus (2003), the changes in this equilibrium state to document in economic theory can only be caused by intervening factors coming from the outside.

In economics, the study of economic development was borne out of an extension to traditional economics that focused entirely on national product, or the aggregate output of goods and services. Economic development was concerned with the expansion of people's entitlements and their corresponding capabilities, morbidity, nourishment, literacy, education, and other socio-economic indicators (Shuaibu, 2015). Borne out of the backdrop of Keynesian economics (advocating government intervention), and neoclassical economics (stressing reduced intervention), with the rise of high-growth countriesand planned governments, economic development and more generally development economics emerged amidst these mid-20th century theoretical interpretations of how economies prosper (Nyarko, 2013). Also, Hirschman (1981), a major contributor to development economics, asserted that economic development grew to concentrate on the poor regions of the world, primarily in Africa, Asia and Latin America yet on the outpouring of fundamental ideas and models.

It has also been argued, notably by Asian and European proponents of infrastructure-based development, that systematic, long-term government investments in transportation, housing, education, and healthcare are necessary to ensure sustainable economic growth in emerging countries (Naidu, Nyarko & Wang. 2016).

2.2.3International Labour Mobility and Economic Development

The economic impact of migration on origin countries and in particular on economic growth, productivity and poverty alleviation is not uniform. It depends on the local context, as well as the nature and intensity of migration flows. The earnings of migrants in the working age group are likely to depend heavily on their education level, age, gender, occupation and sector of work, and employment status.

There are other gains that can be realized. Numerous studies (Panizzon, 2013; Latorre & Reed, 2009; Ratha, 2007) find, for example, a positive impact of remittances on education. One study found that migrants, on average, could contribute to a doubling of education enrollment rates and to a 16-fold reduction in child mortality. Remittances may increase expenditure on education by helping to finance schooling and reducing the need for child labor. Girls' school attendance and educational attainment can rise from the receipt of remittances (Ratha, 2007). Recent ILO research in Moldova demonstrates that children from remittance receiving families have better access to information technology and knowledge of foreign languages, and they could more often afford to continue their studies at tertiary level.

Return migrants have the potential to make a positive contribution to the economic development of their home countries. Migration can increase the likelihood of a return migrant becoming an entrepreneur due to accumulation of savings and human capital, while abroad. In addition, migrants could play a role in facilitating trade and investment flows between origin and destination countries and, as consumers representing large communities, they could create new demands for goods and services.

Brain drain has important consequences for the sustainable development of origin countries. The impact depends on the size and level of development, the sectors and occupations involved, and the nature of migration (temporary, permanent or circular).The departure of skilled labour represents a loss of public investment in education, as well as in potential tax revenues. The departure of highly-skilled individuals could affect innovation and technological progress and, in turn, productivity and growth. Certain professions could be more affected by migration, e.g. health care and education, due to global demand which could lead to a failure in delivery of key social services in countries of origin. Moreover, migration raises the domestic skill level by increasing the interest in upgrading skills, which could benefit the domestic labour market. According to the ILO, one of the best strategies to address the issue of brain drain is based on the concept of circulation of skills, which requires enhanced cooperation between origin and destination countries in order to benefit both.

Some initiatives include mentor-sponsor programs in certain sectors or industries, joint research projects, peer reviewer mechanisms, virtual return (through distance teaching and e-learning), and short-term visits and assignments. In addition, the skills of Diasporas can be tapped by establishing knowledge exchange networks.

2.3 Empirical Issues

Beineet al. (2008) estimated the net effect of the brain drain for 127 developing countries, taking into account also positive impulses coming from the emigration of highly skilled individuals. They found that countries combining relatively low levels of human capital and low-skilled workers' emigration rates are likely to experience a net gain in human capital stock. However, there appear to be more losers than winners among origin countries and, in addition, the losers tend to lose relatively more than the winners gain

Winters (2011) empirically analyzed skilled migration between US cities. The results suggest that the greater immigration to smart cities (i.e., cities with high initial levels of educational attainment) is due almost entirely to persons moving to pursue higher education.

Di Maria and Lazarova (2012) found, analyzing the sample of developing countries covering the years 1990–2000, that a 1% increase in the migration rate of high-skilled workers increased the growth of human capital formation by 0.05%–0.08%. At the same time, however, they estimated that almost 70% of the population in the sample suffers lower growth as a consequence of skilled migration.

Benhabib and Spiegel (1994), conducted a cross-sectional analysis on a sample of around 80 countries, taking the average rate of economic growth in the period 1965–1985 as the dependent variable. The regression coefficient by the increase in education levels turned out positive, but statistically insignificant.

Chen and Dahlman (2004), who conducted research on a sample of 92 countries using data spanning the period 1960–2000, found a significant, positive influence of human capital resources on the rate of economic growth. According to them, extending the average number of years of study by one year meant, ceteris paribus, an increased average economic growth rate of 0.13 percentage points.

2.4 Hypotheses

Ho$_1$: There is no significant relationship between international mobility of labour and remittance from abroad.

Ho$_2$: There is no significant relationship between international mobility of labour and gross national products.

3.0 Method of Study

This study is based on a survey research design, involving triangulation of qualitative and quantitative research techniques. Data were collected from respondents cutting across all works of live, accessible at the immigration office in Port Harcourt, a total of one hundred (100) respondents were randomly selected for the study, thus section was based on the judgment and convenience of the researcher.

The primary data for this study were obtained through a structured questionnaire. Data from the structured questionnaire were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistical tests. Five point likert scale (5-strongly agree, 4 – agree, 3 – neutral, 2 – disagree, 1 – strongly disagree) which enumerates the extent to which the respondents agree or disagree with each of the questionnaire stems, was adopted in this study. The average responses of the respondents were weighed using mean. A total of one hundred 100) copies of questionnaire were administered, however only 92 copies representing 92% were used, while 8 copies (8%) were either discarded due to on accurate filling or unreturned.

4.0 Results and Discussions

Hypotheses Testing

Ho$_1$: There is no significant relationship between international mobility of labour and increasing remittance from abroad.

		SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean
1	Seasoned movement of manpower from Nigeria to the developed nations often improve on the living of their families as a result of financial supports received from these workers abroad.	43	28	4	10	7	3.98
2	When people migrate to economically stable nations, the gains earned from working are extended to their mother land through financial remittance.	39	33	3	13	4	4.0

Based on the information on the above table, majority of respondents were of the opinion that movement of labour abroad can help improve on the living of their relations left behind (i.e. mean=3.98). Also, most of the respondents held a possible view that labour migration abroad increase the well-being of those in Nigeria as gains are remitted back of the country (Mean =4.0). Based on the opinion of majority of the respondents, we thus conclude that international mobility of labour has a positive effect on remittance and in extension, the economic development of Nigeria. Thus we reject the null hypothesis one and accept the alternative hypothesis which holds that, there is a significant relationship between international mobility of labour and increasing remittance from abroad.

Ho$_2$: There is no significant relationship between international mobility of labour and gross national products of Nigeria.

		SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean
1	Movement of labour abroad usually increase job opportunities and possibly earning opportunities of workers whose total output add to gross national products.	41	28	5	10	8	3.91
2	Gross national product usually is a reflection of the contributions of Nigerian abroad to the output of the country. This usually increases with increasing mobility of labour.	44	30	3	9	6	4.10

From the table above, majority of respondents holds a positive view that labour migration abroad increase job opportunities, earnings and output of the labour force which adds to Nigeria's Gross National Products (mean =3.91). Similarly most of the respondents also supports the opinion that gross national products reflects the outputs of labour force migrated abroad which increases as labour mobility increases (mean =4.10). Judging from the general opinion of respondents and the mean score which is far above the average mean score, we thus emphatically state that international mobility of labour has a positive impact on the gross national products of Nigeria. Based on our finding therefore, we reject the null hypothesis two and conclude that there is a positive and significant relationship between international labour mobility and gross national products of Nigeria.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This study examined international mobility of labour and economic development in Nigeria. This study was limited to Yenagoa Metropolis, Bayelsa State, South-South Nigeria. All the relationships proposed among the variables in the research model were tested and it was found that positive relationships exists between the variables having subjected the collected data to empirical analysis with the use of simple percentages and mean. Consequently, the results of the analysis revealed that international mobility of labour influences economic development, this implies that if properly handled, mobility of labour can be profiting to both the home country of the migrants and the country of destination of these mobile labour. The overall result showed that postulated null hypotheses tested were rejected and the alternative hypotheses were accepted.

5.2 Research Findings

Based on the analysis here, the major findings include;

1. International mobility of labour usually enhances the total remittance from abroad which in turn improved on the economic status of relatives in Nigeria.
2. International mobility of labour is instrumental in increasing the total gross national products of Nigeria as the productivity of citizens abroad usually counts.

5.3 Recommendations

In view of the above, we therefore recommended the following:

1. Government should as a matter of urgency address the problem of unemployment so as to check the massive migration of our labor force and as such resolving the problems of brain drain.
2. Students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria should be guided through extensive training on entrepreneurship course to equip them with what it takes to be job makers rather than being job seekers.
3. The manpower assets in Nigeria should be adequately remunerated as such will motivate these assets from contemplated migration to the developed countries to seek better remunerations.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

The researcher believes that this study has to a great extent contributed positively to the existing literature on international mobility of labour and economic development. Also, the outcome of this study will serve as a source of information that can spur up further research in this area of research interest.

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