

LABOUR MIGRATION IN NIGERIA: UNEMPLOYMENT AND INFLATION

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Abstract

Nigeria is undoubtedly Africa's giant, with over two hundred million people. Despite this figure, the country appears to have been flooded with labour migrants working in almost all sectors of the economy, ranging from oil and gas to telecommunications, construction and recent distribution with, among others, the entrance to the super mall, Shoprite. Many organisations play a key role in supporting prospective migrants across regional frontiers of labour migration. This includes employers who directly recruit prospective migrants, public employment agencies that match local labour and jobs abroad, the network of migrants facilitating access to the foreign labour market, and private recruitment and for-profit agencies. The study was anchored on Neoclassical Economics, New Economics of Migration and Segmented Labor-market Theory. The study deployed secondary data from the National Bureau of Statistics (See appendix I – IV). Appendix I shows the entry and exit of the Nigerian labour migration from 2015 – 2018. It was established that international migrants are still a few of the world's population, of just 3.1%. Likewise, the labour movement is predominantly from underdeveloped countries and areas to more developed countries. Internationally, nationally, and regionally, there is a balance between the supply and demand for workers. However, the hidden benefits of migration, namely, the upkeep and eventual strengthening of links between migrants and their countries of origin (i.e., their countries of birth) economically and socially might be more important.

Keywords: Labour Migration, Unemployment, Inflation, Nigeria.

Preamble

In any country, the labour market's economic prospects can be a herculean challenge to capture due to the variability in labour demand and supply, which can adversely lead to high unemployment rates (Akande, 2014). During the economic boom, demand for labour usually surpasses supply, pushing the need for expatriates. The high unemployment rates aggravate economic conditions and contribute to the social instability that deprives many people of the ability to have a decent standard of life. In 2017, ILO (2018) accounted for 164 million of the nearly 258 million foreign migrants in migrant labour.

nations of origin gain significantly from migrant workers' remittances and skills acquired throughout their migration experience, while migrant workers themselves contribute to growth and development in their destination nations. However, the cycle of migration brings with it a number of difficult problems related to policy, the security of migrant workers, connections between migration and development, and international collaboration. The Nigerian embassy handled 106,370 visa applications for migrants in 2019, according to data from the National Statistical Bureau (*see Appendix III*). This further demonstrates the negative effects of unemployment in Nigeria, which may have led to a fall in the GDP, an increase in rural-urban migration, high levels of poverty, a high dependency ratio, and high crime rates. However, it is unclear from the previous studies if factors influencing the labour market, such as inflation, population growth, and industry capacity utilisation, are responsible for Nigeria's high unemployment rate. Thus, the research examines the effects of this labour mobility on the state of unemployment in Nigeria between 2005 and 2018.

Labour Migration

Labour migration can ease the pressure on unemployment in countries of origin and contribute to growth through remittance channelling, know-how transfer, and business and trade networking. In countries with a shortage of labour, orderly and well-managed labour migration can alleviate labour shortages, facilitate mobility and add to human capital stocks. ILO (2015) defined labour migration as all current or unemployed international migrants seeking employment in their current country of residence. In contrast, the Statistics Division of the United Nations (UN SD, 2016), labour migration is regarded as any person who changes their country of permanent residence. The concept of a foreign migrant is exempt from border agents, consular officials and military personnel:

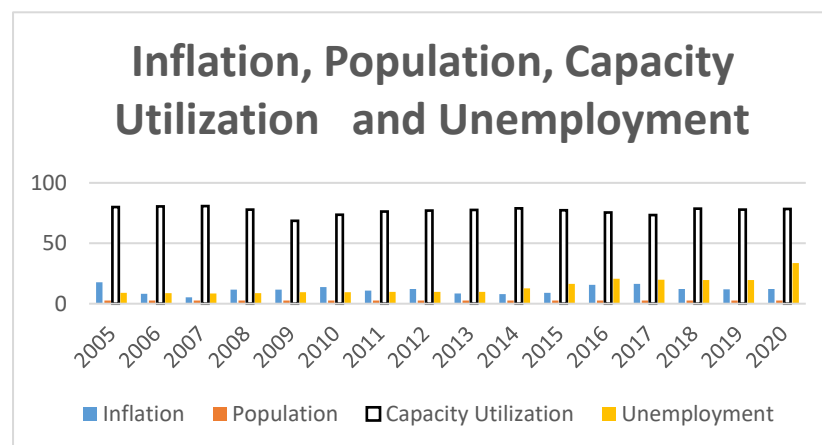
Table 1: Definition of Labour Migration

Types of migrant	The proximity of foreign migrant labour?	The proximity of foreign migrants?
Citizen of the country of residence who is working and was born in another country	No, as did not move in search of work	Yes, as the country of birth differs from the country of residence.
A person born in and working in the country in question but who does not have citizenship	Yes	No
Citizens returning to work in the country in question after working abroad	No, as holding the citizenship of the country of origin	Yes, due to a change in the country of residence
Border workers (who reside in one country but work in another)	Yes	No
Consular official	Yes	No
Military personnel	Yes	No

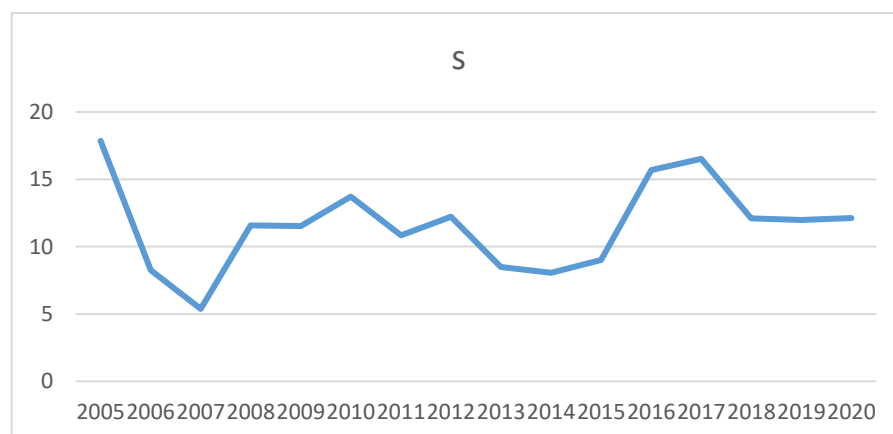
Source: *United Nations Statistics Division (UN SD, 2016)*

Labour Migration Determinants

- a) **Inflation and Unemployment:** According to Torruam and Abur (2014), inflation is defined as an increase in the overall price level that results in a consistent rise in the cost of goods and services and a decrease in the buying power of money. With a low unemployment rate, workers demand greater salaries, which causes wage inflation. A rise in product demand may cause businesses to increase pricing. Thus, in this instance, we see decreased unemployment but greater inflation. Demand-driven inflation, cost-push inflation, and an excessive amount of money in circulation are some of the primary causes of inflation in Nigeria (Udabah, 1999).



Inflation and unemployment are two integral parts of the market economy that multiple factors, including government spending, money supply, and interest rates can influence. Sadare & Elegbede (2012) argued that economic crisis, government policy, expatriate jobs and trade union salaries require a high unemployment rate in Nigeria. By raising aggregate demand, the government can reduce the unemployment rate. While this could temporarily increase employment, it could also have inflationary consequences for Nigeria's labour and product markets.

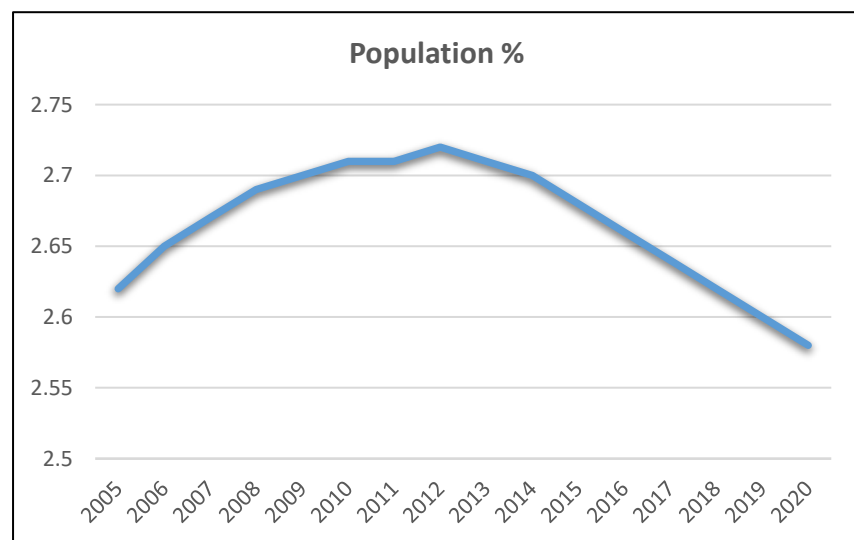


As recorded from the above line graph, Nigeria dropped from 17.86 per cent to 5.38 per cent between 2005–2007. This leads to a drop in the unemployment rate from 9.04% to 8.51%. The Nigerian economy, however, witnessed a persistent rise in inflation of 11.58% -12.22% in 2008-2012. As a result, the unemployment rate increased from 8.66 per cent to 9.71 per cent. As a result, low market shares have a significant impact on productivity leading to a situation of unemployment in the country. The inflation rate fell to 8.48% and 8.06% in 2013 and 2014, while the unemployment rate fell from 9.84% to -12.62%. Nevertheless, these improvements did not last long when the inflation rate grew again to 9.01%, 15.68% and 16.52%, respectively, between 2015, 2016 and 2017. In comparison, unemployment fluctuated from 16.30 per cent to 20.67 per cent in 2015 and 2016 and gradually decreased to 19.96 per cent in 2017. Between 2018 and 2019, Nigeria's inflation rate is 12.09% to 11.98%. Consequently, unemployment drops slightly for the same proportion, from 19.68% to 19.58%. Nevertheless, the country witnessed an increase in the cost of goods and services, which increased the inflation rate to 12.13 per cent in 2020. This further increased Nigeria's

unemployment rate to 33.50 per cent due to the unfavourable economic situation affecting manufacturing companies.

- b) **Population and Unemployment:** Population is the number of people residing in a region. The 1991 census performed in Nigeria placed the population of Nigeria at 88.9 million, but now projected at 206.14 million, which reflects a rise of 231 per cent over three decades. The population of Nigeria is identified to be growing rapidly. A rapid population increase can be credited to three main factors: birth rate, death rate and migration. However, Nigeria's migration rate marginalises the unemployment rate (Odo, Elom-Obed, Nwachukwu & Okoro, 2017). The shortage of birth control is a significant trigger that causes unemployment problems in Nigeria. This is due to non-absorptive job opportunities due to poor birth control and increased rural-urban migration in the country for many people. Therefore, the rate at which Nigerians give birth should be restricted since unrestrained reproduction contributes more to the country's problems.

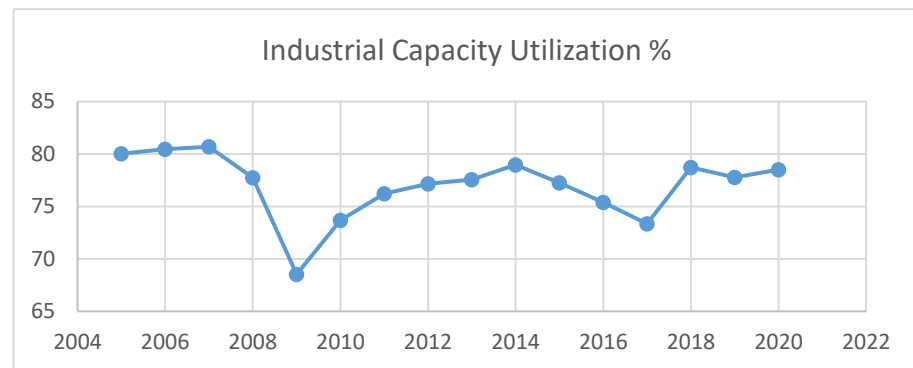
Population



Typically, the priority attached to the line graph above was to show the population-rate data variable in Nigeria from 2005-2020. The graph depicts that, over time, there have been many changes. The patterns demonstrated the fluctuation of population levels of Nigeria in the short and long term. Its results indicated that the population sloped (increase) in the last seven years until reaching the peak (optimum) at

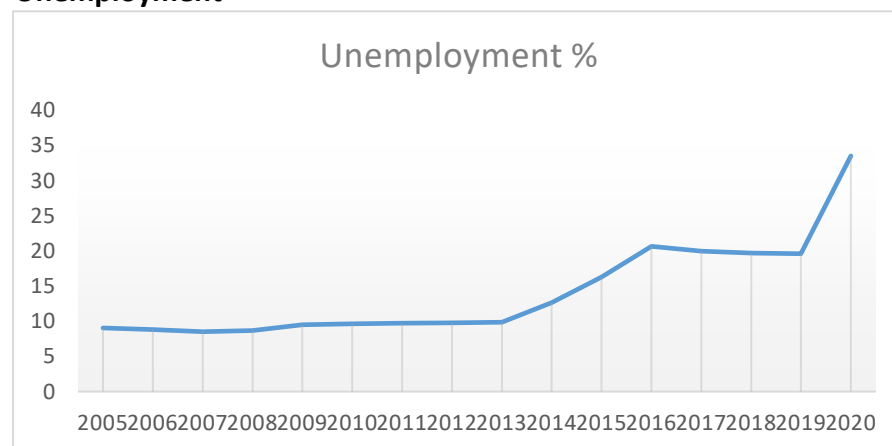
2.72 per cent in 2012. The population is decreasing more in a downward sloping trend from 2013 to 2020. The line dynamics help forecast the population growth in Nigeria with the implications of prior policy attempts to hold the population growth in check to preserve the size of the labour force that is a core determinant of the labour market economy during 2005-2020.

Capacity Utilisation



The patterns illustrated above indicate the vulnerability and intensity of the special ability utilisation rate in Nigeria in the period 2005-2020. Between 2005 and 2008, with capacity usage at 80 per cent and above, major improvements were reported most. A fall from 2008 to 2009 indicates the fundamental imbalance in the usage of manufacturing resources to accommodate just 68.53%. This has scarcely shrunk and is Nigeria's lowest in labour market history. Efforts have been made to expand production efficiency by 78.96 per cent in 2010-2014. Those rates continue to decline between 2014-2017. Therefore, 2017 was noted for another decline in industrial efficiency; then, attempts were taken from 2017 to 2018 to maintain industrial capacity at 78 per cent on average. Industrial capacity stood at 78 per cent in 2019, while further efforts kept it rising to a maximum of 78.51 per cent above the typical average rate in 2020.

Unemployment



The unemployment rate in Nigeria increased dramatically annually from the outcome of the line graph above. Several efforts have been made to keep it under control from 2005-2013 at 10 per cent. From 2013-2019 the unemployment rate increased by more than two folds. A 20 per cent double-digit unemployment rate was first reported optimally in 2016. This marked the start of hardship in the labour market economy until it began to decline in 2019. A further massive unemployment rate was noticeably recorded in 2020. The result predicts a continuous change in unemployment that proceeded in that trend until drastic efforts were made to curb the sloping upward inclination to absorb people in the labour market in Nigeria.

Types of Labour Migration

Labour migration can be divided into several types. One of the potential dividings was specified by Bastyr (2005) cited in Mizanur (2012):

1. **Incentive migration:** Is a reference to the destination country's invitation. This country usually requires specialists from specific professions (such as the doctors above) and can afford to pay them due to their economic strength and maturity. Other impetus for migrants than wages are career opportunities and higher living standards.
2. **Demand migration:** When the desire comes from the migrant and can be driven either positively or negatively. In this scenario, the danger to the target country is a large influx of unskilled (but cheap) labour-force which logically changes labour market conditions (employment or wages)
3. **Domestic migration:** Is a migrant's long-term stay in the target country, often leading to permanent relocations. Usually, the primary criterion here is the amount of income that can overcome the otherwise strong social and cultural bonds with the home country of the migrant (family, etc.). The disparity between the home nation and the target country in real wages is very individual, at least twice the actual domestic pay.
4. **Commuting (oscillating) migration:** In comparison to previous forms of labour migration, the place of residence and residency of a worker in the home country. Migrant goes to work either by commuting every day or living abroad for a brief period (usually for a week, less frequently month) and then returning home (usually for a weekend).

It is evident from the characteristics mentioned above that the target countries are mostly the neighbouring countries of the home country.

Factors Affecting Migration of Labour

Several factors are mitigating the migration of labour as observed by Martin (2005); Daniel, Joseph, & Hoose (2008):

- a) When there are differences in salaries for equivalent jobs, the intention of the major health workers to leave.
- b) Similarly, the issue of access to host countries' benefits system plus state education, housing, health care, among others, has also triggered the intention to migrate.
- c) Chances of learning and development vary among nations, especially for younger health workers.
- d) A desire to travel, to learn a new language, to develop new skills and qualifications and networks.
- e) A desire to escape repression and corruption, especially in failed states
- f) The influence of satellite television and the Internet is shifting the perceptions of individuals
- g) Effects of cheaper transnational telephone calls and more affordable air and coach travel within the European Union, for example
- h) Individuals within the domestic economy are reluctant to take on such "drudge-filled" jobs as porters, cleaners and petrol workers

Impact of Labour Migration

The migration will positively and negatively affect the migrants' lives. Supporters of inward labour migration, for example, have argued that migration offers many benefits:

1. **New skills:** Migrants can provide domestic workers with complementary expertise that can improve profitability (a Brazilian child male offers excellent quality childcare at a reasonable price that encourages a highly paying female magazine editor to start working).
2. **Innovation and entrepreneurial drivers:** Inward migration can also drive technological change and a new source of entrepreneurship. A lot of innovation comes from the work of people's teams with different perspectives and experiences. Migrant networks speed up technology spread.

3. **Social life:** It helps improve people's social lives as they learn new cultures, customs and languages that help improve people's brotherhood
4. **Policy pressure to reform:** Labor displacement may also bring a political strain on weak governments and regimes, such as a mass evacuation of Zimbabwe's productive labourers.
5. **Multiplier effects:** New workers create new jobs; there is a multiplier effect if they find work and contribute to a nation's GDP by increasing aggregate demand.
6. **Reducing skilled labour shortages and increasing labour supply:** migration can help alleviate labour shortages and help control wage inflation. For example, hiring skilled workers from outside the European Union is vital to many businesses in the UK, and evidence suggests that they are making a positive difference to UK GDP at the moment.
7. **Making FDI desirable to a country:** Labor availability and efficiency is considered to be key investment location consideration for many businesses. Suppose a country is not successful in attracting and maintaining skilled workers in a global battle for talent. In that case, FDI in high-knowledge industries will eventually flow to other parts of the globe.
8. **Income flows (remittances):** refunds sent home from migrants add to the home nations' gross national income. And if such remittances boost spending in those countries, that creates a fresh demand for other nations' exports. According to Oxford University economist Professor Ian Goldin, remittances support more than 50 million people in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the numbers in Africa and Asia are even higher.
9. **Unemployment:** joblessness is reduced, and people are given better job opportunities
10. **Tax revenues:** Working legal immigrants pay direct and indirect taxes and are likely net contributors to the government's finances.

Managing and Staffing Migrant Labour

Today, employers are increasingly focusing on managing human resource activities locally. Their main concern is to select, train, appraise and manage the employees in the country where they are doing business. However, a big issue has been determining whether to fill local vacancies with native or expatriate workers (Isiaka, Aliyu, Aremu, Abogunrin & Abdullah 2016; Goodridge, 2001). Dessler (2013) states that various considerations, such as

technological expertise, decide how businesses use locals or expatriates overseas, i.e. businesses may use one of three (3) different methods to handle and hire their subsidiaries.

1. **Ethnocentrism:** It is with this approach that home country practice prevails. Home-country headquarters make key decisions, home-country employees hold significant jobs, and the subsidiaries follow resource management practices in the home country. Reasons given for staffing policies on ethnocentrism include a lack of qualified senior management talent from the host country, a desire to maintain a unified corporate culture and tighter control and a desire to transfer core competencies from the parent company.
2. **Polycentrism:** Each subsidiary is administered locally. A local employee leads a division because the managers at headquarters are not deemed to have adequate local expertise. Subsidiary organisations typically build strategies for handling human capital locally. Such policies can reduce local cultural misunderstandings if expatriate managers are used.
3. **Geocentrism:** The organisation introducing the Internationally Unified Marketing Model handles and hires internationally. A staffing policy on geocentrism seeks out the best people, regardless of nationality, for key jobs throughout the organisation. It will help the global firm to more completely leverage its human capital by moving the right worker to the available job wherever they are.

Under the ethnocentric approach, the home country's ancestral traditions and corporate practise predominate. Headquarters develops and consistently applies a management and staffing approach around the world. Companies who follow the ethnocentric method believe that the path to the home country is better and workers from other areas will follow it. Headquarters managers develop practices and hold key positions within the subsidiaries to ensure consistency.

Labour Migration: The Theoretical Framework

Neoclassical Economics: Neoclassical economics, the oldest and most well-known theoretical model, argues that migration is caused by geographic differences in labour supply and demand (Lewis 1954, Ranis and Fei 1961). A region with a large labour endowment relative to capital will get a low equilibrium wage, whereas a high market wage will mark an environment with a small labour endowment relative to capital. The resulting salary gap

causes low-wage or labour-surplus workers to move to the high-wage or labour-scarce regions. As a result, the supply of labour decreases, and wages gradually rise in the capital-poor world, while the supply of labour increases and salaries inevitably drop in the capital-rich sector, resulting in a spatial wage differential that adequately represents the costs of inter-regional, pecuniary and psychological migration.

People want to move where they will be more successful because of their skills, but before they can enjoy the higher incomes associated with improved labour productivity, they must invest in the material cost of transport, the expense of self-support when travelling and searching for jobs, the effort involved in studying a new environment and perhaps a different community, the challenge of adapting to a new environment.

Potential migrants estimate the cost and benefits of moving to alternative locations and migrate to where the expected discounted net return is greatest over their projected working lives. Net future returns are estimated by taking the observed earnings in the destination area and multiplying them by the probability of obtaining a job there to derive 'expected destination earnings,' which are subtracted from the estimated earnings for the place of origin (observed earnings times the probability of employment).

The New Economics of Migration: A 'new labour movement economics' has recently emerged from testing the neoclassical theory's premises and conclusions (Stark 1991). A key insight into this approach is that isolated individuals do not make migration decisions but within larger units of interrelated people, typically families or households, but sometimes whole communities and that people act collectively not only to maximise expected income but also to maximise status within an embedded hierarchy, overcome barriers to capital and credit, and minimise risk. Risks to household revenue are managed in most developed countries through institutional mechanisms. Crop insurance schemes and futures markets provide farmers with a way to protect themselves from natural disasters and price fluctuations. In contrast, unemployment insurance and government transfer schemes protect workers from recessions and job losses through structural change. Meanwhile, private or government-sponsored retirement services give people a way of insuring against the danger of old-age deprivation.

Without such programmes, households are better positioned to control risks to economic well-being than individuals. They can easily diversify revenue sources by allocating family workers to different labour markets. As long as

economic conditions are negatively or weakly correlated across the labour markets, households minimise risk by diversifying their labour portfolios geographically. In case there is insufficient income generated by economic conditions at home deteriorating and productive activities, the household may rely on migrant remittances for support. Credit and capital markets in many settings are incomplete or inaccessible, and in the absence of an efficient banking system, migration becomes attractive as a strategy to accumulate funds that can be used in place of borrowing. Families send one or more workers to a higher pay region to collect savings or return them in the form of remittances. While most migrant savings and remittances go towards consumption, some of the funds may also be channelled into productive investment.

Segmented Labor-market Theory: Although neoclassical theory and modern labour movement systems provide divergent theories for the movement's origins, all are models of micro-level decision-making. What varies is the decision-making units (individual or household), the institution being maximised or reduced (profit vs. risk), the economic nature of decision-making (complete and well-functioning economies vs incomplete or fragmented economies) and the degree to which the judgement on relocation is socially normative (whether profit is measured in absolute terms). The segmented labour market theory is separate from these models, which argues that migration stems from the intrinsic features built into a modern industrial society. Migration is not caused by push factors in sending regions (low wages or high unemployment), according to Piore (1979), but by pull factors in receiving areas (a chronic and inevitable need for migrant workers). The built-in demand for cheap and flexible workers arises from three fundamental features of advanced industrial economies.

The first is in terms of economic inflation. Wages not only reflect supply and demand conditions; they also confer status and prestige, social qualities which inherit in jobs. People generally believe wages should reflect social status, and they clearly know the correlation between employment status and pay. As a result, employers aren't fully free to adapt to worker supply shifts. Various implicit social norms and structured administrative structures (union contracts, civil service laws, regulatory legislation, business work classifications) ensure that salaries reflect the reputation and rank hierarchies people experience and expect.

Social constraints on motivation within employment hierarchies also compound demand for cheap, flexible work. Most people are not only working

to generate income but to accumulate social status as well. At the bottom of any job hierarchy, acute motivational issues arise because there is no status to maintain and few upward mobility avenues. The problem is structural because the bottom of the labour market can not be eliminated. Mechanisation to eliminate the lowest and least desirable job class will create a new bottom tier consisting of jobs that once stood just above the bottom. Since there must always be a bottom in every ladder, there are inescapable motivational issues. Employers also require employees who see bottom-level positions merely as a way to the end of making money, and for whom employment is limited to income alone, with no implications for rank or reputation. Migrants satisfy that need for a variety of reasons. They start as target earners, seeking to earn money to improve their home status or well-being by building a house, paying for school, buying land, buying consumer goods. Besides, the disjunction in living standards between communities of origin and destination often means that low urban or foreign wages seem generous to the standards of the sending society.

The demand for migrant labour is also due to economic dualism. Capital is a fixed factor of production which may be idled but not laid off by lower demand; the owners of capital must bear the costs of their unemployment. Labor is a variable production factor that can be released when demand falls so workers will bear the costs of their own unemployment. Therefore, wherever possible, the capitalist seeks the stable, permanent part of the demand and reserves it for the use of equipment, whereas the addition of labour meets the variable part of the demand. Capital-intensive methods are thus used to meet basic demand, and labor-intensive methods are reserved for the fluctuating, seasonal component. This dualism induces worker tension, leading to a labour force bifurcation.

Labour Migration: Data Presentation and Analysis

Secondary data obtained from the National Bureau of Statistics (See appendix I – IV). Appendix I shows the entry and the exit in the Nigerian labour migration from 2015 – 2018, in the year 2015, the number of persons arriving in Nigeria processed by immigration was 1,578,715 and 956,081 for Nigerian and non-Nigerian respectively. There was little reduction in 2016 1,247,424 and 505,704 Nigerian and non-Nigerian respectively. In 2017, a significant increase in the entry, for instance, 2,401,383 and 874,546 for Nigerian and non-Nigerians respectively. While the number of arrival persons decreased in 2018 rises from to 1,209,897 and 612,604 for Nigerian and non-Nigerian respectively. Similarly, the number of persons departing Nigeria processed by

immigration in 2015 was 1,760,530 and 861,240 for Nigerian and non-Nigerian, respectively. In 2016, 1,361,580 and 372,712 for Nigerian and non-Nigerian respectively. 2017, for departing persons (Nigerian, 2,640,508) and (non-Nigerian 960,426). While 1,181,211 (Nigerian) and 478,413 (non-Nigerian) departed persons in 2018. That implies that the total number of departed persons from Nigerians outweighed that of the persons arriving in Nigeria as processed by immigration. While the number of Nigerians refused entry abroad between 2015 and 2018 amounted to 13,601 (i.e. 1,241; 1,101; 278; and 10,981) for 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018, respectively.

Appendix II revealed the enforcement of Nigerian and non-Nigerians deported and repatriated from abroad between 2015 and 2018. The charts further show the repatriated irregular migrants for 2015 (4,706), 2016 (2454), 2017 (3799) and 2018 (3065). Similarly, the Nigerian deported/repatriated from abroad in the years 2015 to 2018 was 7,390; 3,409; 313 and 3,457 while the foreigners deported between those periods were just 32. Appendix III presents the number of visa applications at the Nigerian mission for the year 2018. The total number of visa processing for Africa countries were 16,232, for Asia countries, 40,028, for America, 4,534. While for the European countries, was 44,603, with 106,370 visa applications processed at Nigeria mission during the first, second, third, and fourth quarters of the year 2018.

The final Appendix IV analyse the local revenue generated for the year 2018. Passport revenue = ₦13.3billion, non-refundable revenue for operation = ₦169.5million, address verification = ₦1.3billion, Combined Expatriate Residence Permit and Aliens Card (CERPAC) Revenue = ₦19.9billion, Revenue from Emergency Travel Certificate (ETC) and Ecowas Residence Card (ERC) = ₦48.2million and Extension of Visitors Pass (E-PASS) = ₦1.2billion given the total of ₦36.1billion. The analysis for the offshore revenue for 2018 shows Passport Revenue = \$37.7million, Passport Revenue (other currencies) = \$43,763, Carrier Liability / Visa on Arrival = \$1.1million, Visa Issued at Nigerian Missions = \$14.9million with a total of \$53.7million.

Conclusion

The study found that labour movement from one country to another has become an increasingly important aspect of the globalising environment, and it has many major cultural, social and political impacts. More than 200 million people have reportedly lived in countries where they were not born. However, international migrants are still a small fraction of the world's population, at just 3.1%. Likewise, the labour movement is predominantly from

underdeveloped countries and areas to more developed countries. Supply and demand in the labour market are in equilibrium on a global, national, and regional scale. Still, the secret positive results of migration, i.e. maintenance and eventual reinforcement of economic and socio-cultural ties between migrants and countries of origin (their countries of origin), may be more critical. Preserving these ties may have far-reaching consequences as it can reverse the negative image of the lack of a specially qualified labour force (brain drain) and turn the whole cycle to the advantage of the source countries (usually weaker and less developed). Migrants may bring back to these countries some means and significant know-how to improve the number of key economic sectors. In its essential never-ending stream of people, labour migration is often concentrated in the flows chosen. The rich countries often demand a skilled workforce, as indicated, but with this group of people, the far larger masses of unqualified people very often move hand in hand. These unqualified people occupy important positions in some service sectors, which have been denied as menial or financially uninteresting by indigenous residents for some time. This imbalance reinforces gaps between source and destination countries. Globally, Asia and Europe are the most attractive migration destinations for most Nigerians who migrated in 2018.

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