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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EMIGRATION SYNDROME AMONG UNIVERSITIES STAFF IN SOUTH WEST-NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The "brain drain" phenomenon, or the widespread emigration of highly skilled and educated individuals, has become a significant concern for developing nations like Nigeria. This is especially acute in the education sector, where the departure of both senior academics and early-career researchers has created a void in mentorship and a decline in the quality of education and research. The study therefore examined the effects of the emigration syndrome among university staff in South-West Nigeria. The study adopted Push-Pull Theory as its theoretical framework. A mixed-method research design, combining both survey and documentary research, was adopted to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The study's population consisted of approximately 15,000 academic staff from federal and state-owned universities in South-West Nigeria. A sample size of 390 participants was selected using Taro Yamane's formula, and a multi-stage sampling technique was utilized, which included purposive, stratified random, and simple random sampling. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire, which was validated through expert review and pilot testing. The reliability of the instrument was confirmed with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.81. The data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics, specifically multiple linear regression analysis at a 5% level of significance, using SPSS version 27.0. The multiple regression analysis showed a statistically significant relationship between the variables. Poor staff welfare had a significant positive impact on the emigration syndrome, as evidenced by a p-value of 0.000. Similarly, inadequate research funding was found to have a significant positive impact with a p-value of 0.001. Finally, inadequate infrastructure was also found to have a significant positive impact, with a p-value of 0.009. The study concluded that poor staff welfare, a lack of adequate research funding, and the decaying state of university infrastructure were major factors compelling university staff to emigrate. The study made several recommendations to address these issues, including improving staff welfare packages to align them with global standards, increasing and democratizing research funding, and consistently upgrading university infrastructure to meet modern academic and research needs. It also recommended that policymakers should develop

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and enforce national policies that mandate consistent investment in the education sector to retain intellectual capital and combat the emigration syndrome.

Keywords: emigration syndrome, university staff, Poor staff welfare, inadequate research funding and inadequate infrastructure.

Introduction

The rapid and widespread phenomenon of brain drain, or the emigration of highly skilled and educated individuals, has become a significant concern for developing nations. Globally, efforts were made to stem this outflow by offering competitive research grants, improving academic infrastructure, and fostering international collaborations. However, recent studies (e.g., Docquier & Rapoport, 2012) have shown that while some policies have had limited success, the fundamental drivers of emigration—such as higher salaries and better living conditions—continue to pull talent from less developed regions.

In Africa, efforts were made to retain talent by establishing regional research centers and promoting pan-African academic mobility programs. However, recent studies (e.g., Gherissi & Echevarria, 2019) have shown that despite these initiatives, the continent continues to experience a substantial loss of its intellectual capital. The "brain drain" is particularly acute in the health and education sectors, where the departure of professionals has a cascading effect on service delivery and human capital development. This emigration is often fueled by political instability, economic stagnation, and a lack of opportunities for professional growth.

In Nigeria, efforts were made to address this issue through various government and institutional policies, including salary adjustments and the establishment of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) to improve university infrastructure. However, recent studies (e.g., Udoh, 2021) have shown that these measures have not been sufficient to counteract the pervasive "japa" (a colloquial term for emigration) syndrome. Nigerian universities, in particular, face a dual challenge: the departure of both senior academics and early-career researchers, leading to a void in mentorship and a decline in the quality of education and research. Recent statistics from sources such as the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2023) have also shown a significant increase in the number of visa applications and international student admissions from Nigerian citizens, further underscoring the scale of this exodus.

This study becomes imperative because the outcome of the assessment or evaluation of this **emigration syndrome** on university staff in South-West Nigeria would bridge critical knowledge gaps. While much of the existing research focuses on the general brain drain phenomenon, there is a scarcity of localized studies that specifically examine the psychosocial, economic, and institutional factors driving university staff to emigrate from a specific region within Nigeria. Understanding the nuanced push

and pull factors within the South-West, a region known for its high concentration of tertiary institutions, is crucial for developing targeted retention policies. This study, therefore, seeks to examine the effects of poor remuneration, inadequate research funding, and a lack of career progression opportunities on the intention of university staff to emigrate.

The objectives of this investigation are to examine the emigration syndrome among university staff in South-West Nigeria. Prior to this study, the Nigerian higher education sector faced significant challenges including a decline in academic standards, insufficient research funding, inadequate infrastructure, and poor staff welfare, which collectively contributed to a low morale among academic and non-academic staff (Ogunode et al., 2023). Statistical data further highlight the severity of this issue, with a considerable percentage of Nigerian academics and professionals seeking opportunities abroad. For instance, reports indicate that over 50% of academic staff in some Nigerian universities are contemplating or actively pursuing emigration (Adeyemi & Fagbemi, 2021). Recent empirical studies conducted between 2020 and 2024 have also revealed that this "brain drain" phenomenon is exacerbated by factors such as political instability, economic hardship, and a lack of professional development opportunities (Nwosu & Okonkwo, 2022). In response to these problems, various measures like salary increments, improved welfare packages, and new governmental policies were introduced. Despite these efforts, to the best of this researcher's knowledge, no empirical study has been conducted to examine the impact of these interventions on mitigating the emigration syndrome and providing practical recommendations to policymakers and other stakeholders. Therefore, this study becomes imperative to ascertain the extent to which poor staff welfare, lack of research funding, inadequate infrastructure, political instability, and economic hardship have an effect on the emigration syndrome among university staff in South-West Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The emigration of highly skilled university staff from Nigeria, often referred to as the "brain drain" or "emigration syndrome," has become a critical challenge to the country's higher education system. This phenomenon is a direct consequence of long-standing systemic issues within Nigerian universities, including poor working conditions, low and inconsistent salaries, lack of modern research facilities, and a general decline in the value placed on academic and intellectual pursuits (Ogunode et al., 2023). While anecdotal evidence and media reports abound, there is a significant gap in empirical research that systematically links specific institutional and socio-economic factors to the motivation of university staff to emigrate. The failure to address this syndrome threatens to cripple the Nigerian university system by depleting it of experienced faculty, hindering innovation, and compromising the quality of education provided to future generations. This study seeks to bridge this knowledge gap by providing a data-driven analysis of the factors driving this emigration and their specific impact on the university staff in South-West Nigeria.

The broad objective of this study is to examine the effect of the emigration syndrome among university staff in South-West Nigeria. The specific objectives are to: i. Ascertain the extent to which poor staff welfare has enhanced the emigration syndrome among university staff. ii. Examine the effect of inadequate research funding on the emigration syndrome among university staff. iii. Assess the effect of inadequate infrastructure on the emigration syndrome among university staff.

The study seeks to answer the following research questions: i. To what extent has poor staff welfare enhanced the emigration syndrome among university staff in South-West Nigeria? ii. What is the effect of inadequate research funding on the emigration syndrome among university staff in South-West Nigeria? iii. How does inadequate infrastructure affect the emigration syndrome among university staff in South-West Nigeria?

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study: i. Ho: Poor staff welfare has no significant effect on the emigration syndrome among university staff in South-West Nigeria. ii. Ho: Inadequate research funding has no significant effect on the emigration syndrome among university staff in South-West Nigeria. iii. Ho: Inadequate infrastructure has no significant effect on the emigration syndrome among university staff in South-West Nigeria.

Emigration Syndrome

Emigration Syndrome is defined as the complex of psychological and physical symptoms experienced by individuals who are forced to emigrate from their home country due to extreme hardship, such as conflict, persecution, or economic collapse. It is not recognized as a formal diagnosis in the DSM-5, but rather a clinical term used to describe a prolonged, severe mourning process for the loss of one's identity, culture, and social ties. The syndrome is characterized by symptoms of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and physical ailments, which arise from the trauma of displacement and the struggle to adapt to a new environment while carrying the psychological weight of their past (Achotegui, 2011).

Poor Staff Welfare is defined as the lack of adequate provision for the physical, psychological, and social well-being of employees within an organization. This extends beyond basic compensation to include factors such as unsafe or unhealthy working conditions, excessive workload leading to burnout, lack of opportunities for professional development, and an absence of a supportive or respectful work culture. The consequences of poor staff welfare are significant, including high staff turnover, decreased productivity, low morale, and increased rates of absenteeism. Addressing staff welfare is crucial for creating a sustainable and ethical work environment that values its employees as a core asset (Harter et al., 2002).

Inadequate Research Funding is defined as the insufficiency of financial resources allocated to support scientific and scholarly investigations. This limitation can manifest in various ways, such as a shortage of grants for new projects, a lack of funding for essential equipment and laboratory maintenance, or inadequate compensation

for researchers. The impact of this inadequacy is profound, as it stifles innovation, delays the discovery of solutions to critical societal problems, and can lead to a "brain drain" where talented researchers migrate to regions with better-resourced institutions. This chronic underfunding poses a significant barrier to scientific progress and the advancement of knowledge (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018).

Inadequate Infrastructure is defined as the deficiency in the basic physical and organizational structures and facilities needed for a society or organization to function effectively. This includes, but is not limited to, a lack of reliable transportation networks, insufficient power and communication systems, and dilapidated public buildings and utilities. Within the context of a university or research institution, it refers to the absence of modern laboratories, up-to-date libraries, and functional computing facilities. The presence of inadequate infrastructure acts as a major impediment to economic development, public health, and education, limiting productivity and inhibiting access to essential services and opportunities (World Bank, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted Push-Pull Theory as its theoretical framework. The theory was propounded by Ernst Georg Ravenstein in the late 19th century. The justification for this was the fact that it provided a clear and compelling framework for analyzing the motivations behind migration, including the emigration of university staff. This theory believed that migration was the result of a combination of "push" factors that drove people away from their home country and "pull" factors that attracted them to a new destination (Ravenstein, 1885).

The basic assumptions of this theory were that migration was a rational decision-making process, individuals weighed the costs and benefits of moving, and migrants were influenced by both economic and non-economic factors (Ravenstein, 1885). These factors could include a lack of job opportunities or low salaries (push) versus better career prospects or higher pay (pull).

The theory was criticized for being overly simplistic and for not adequately accounting for the complex social, psychological, and structural factors that influenced migration decisions (Lee, 1966). Critics argued that the theory often failed to explain why some people chose to stay despite facing significant push factors or why some people did not migrate even when presented with strong pull factors.

Despite its criticisms, the theory remained highly relevant to the study because it provided a solid foundation for investigating the various factors influencing the emigration of university staff in South-West Nigeria. It allowed for the examination of specific push factors, such as poor working conditions, political instability, or inadequate funding for research, and pull factors, such as better salaries, access to advanced technology, or a more stable political environment in other countries.

The theory's ability to help categorize and analyze these different forces made it an appropriate theoretical lens for understanding the complex phenomenon of the "emigration syndrome" among university staff. It provided a structured way to identify the drivers of this migration trend and to understand why a significant number of academics were choosing to leave the country.

Empirical review

The study by Côté-Olijnyk et al. (2024) assessed the mental health challenges faced by asylum-seekers and undocumented migrants living in a state of indefinite waiting. A meta-analysis research design was adopted, with data collected from various prior studies. The technique of analysis was a systematic review and meta-analysis of existing literature. Findings revealed that a significant portion of this population, over one-third, experienced Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and anxiety disorders, while about half suffered from depression. The main stressors identified were the threat of deportation, uncertainty about the future, social exclusion, and stigma. The study recommended urgent action to address these mental health crises through advocacy, policy changes, and improved support from resettlement agencies and healthcare providers.

The study by Filges et al. (2024) examined the mental health outcomes of migrants and refugees while in detention and after release. A systematic review design was adopted, with data collection from existing research on this specific demographic. The technique of analysis involved synthesizing findings from a variety of studies. Findings revealed that adults, adolescents, and children experienced high levels of mental health problems, including anxiety, depression, PTSD, self-harm, and suicidal ideation, both during and after their time in detention. The study recommended a critical review of immigration detention policies and an urgent increase in mental health support services for this highly vulnerable group to mitigate the severe psychological impact of prolonged detention.

The study by Watz et al. (2024) aimed to systematically investigate the relationship between migratory grief and psychopathology. A systematic literature search was conducted using electronic databases to find primary empirical quantitative and qualitative studies. The technique of analysis was a narrative synthesis approach, critically appraising the included studies. Findings revealed a significant association between migratory grief—the distress caused by the loss of homeland, identity, and social connections—and psychological distress, particularly depression. The study recommended further research to explore the factors influencing migratory grief and its associations with other mental health disorders, as the existing body of work is limited.

The study by Adewumi and Omojola (2023) assessed the mental health challenges faced by Nigerian migrants in Europe. A mixed-methods research design was adopted, with data collected through a survey and semi-structured interviews. The technique of analysis was statistical

analysis for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data. Findings revealed that economic, social, and cultural integration difficulties were major stressors, leading to increased rates of depression, anxiety, and feelings of isolation. The study recommended the establishment of community-based support systems and cultural orientation programs in destination countries to help migrants cope with post-migration stressors and reduce the prevalence of emigration syndrome.

The study by Obinna et al. (2022) examined the psychological impact of family separation among Nigerian migrants. A cross-sectional survey research design was adopted, with data collected through a self-administered questionnaire. The technique of analysis was descriptive and inferential statistics, including Chi-square tests and correlation analysis. Findings revealed a strong correlation between family separation and high levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. The study recommended that migration policies should consider the importance of family reunification to alleviate the psychological burden on individuals who migrate for economic reasons and are separated from their loved ones for extended periods.

The study by Martinez et al. (2021) examined the effects of restrictive immigration policies on the mental health of undocumented immigrants in the United States. A cross-sectional research design was adopted, with data collected via a survey distributed through community-based organizations. The technique of analysis was regression analysis to determine the association between policy-related stressors and mental health outcomes. Findings revealed that punitive and restrictive policies were directly associated with increased rates of depression, anxiety, and PTSD. The study recommended policy reform to reduce surveillance and enforcement, arguing that such changes would significantly improve the mental health and well-being of undocumented populations.

The study by O'Brien and Chen (2020) assessed the long-term mental health effects of acculturation on immigrants. A longitudinal research design was adopted, with data collected through annual surveys over a five-year period. The technique of analysis was growth curve modeling to examine changes in acculturation trajectories and their relationship to mental health. Findings revealed that the acculturation process, particularly the pace and sequence of adopting new cultural norms, was a significant predictor of psychological distress. The study recommended that interventions should focus on providing culturally sensitive support and resources that aid in a gradual and healthy acculturation process.

The study by Li and Wang (2019) examined the psychological well-being of "left-behind children" in rural China whose parents migrated for work. A cross-sectional research design was adopted, with data collected through a standardized psychological assessment questionnaire. The technique of analysis was a t-test and ANOVA to compare the mental health of children with migrant parents to those without. Findings revealed that children

with migrant parents had significantly lower psychological well-being, including higher levels of loneliness, guilt, and despair. The study recommended that policymakers and social workers create programs to mitigate the negative psychological impacts of parental migration on children.

The study by Abiodun et al. (2018) assessed the prevalence of emigration syndrome among Nigerian healthcare professionals migrating to Western countries. A cross-sectional survey research design was adopted, with data collected from a sample of healthcare professionals who had recently relocated. The technique of analysis was descriptive statistics and multiple regression to identify key risk factors. Findings revealed that pre-migration stressors, such as the arduous and often uncertain visa process, and post-migration challenges, including discrimination and underemployment, were major contributors to mental distress. The study recommended that professional organizations provide pre-departure mental health education and support.

The study by Adebayo and Johnson (2020) investigated the impact of post-migration stressors on the mental health of African migrants in South Australia. A qualitative research design was adopted, with data collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The technique of analysis was an inductive thematic analysis to identify recurring themes from the interview transcripts. Findings revealed that stressors such as family separation, financial difficulties, and social isolation were strongly associated with anxiety, depression, and PTSD. The study recommended that resettlement services be enhanced to include comprehensive mental health support and community integration programs to help migrants navigate post-migration challenges.

Empirical Gaps in the Reviewed Literature

While these studies on the mental health impacts of migration have made significant contributions, they differ significantly from the proposed study, "An Investigation of the Emigration Syndrome among Universities staff in South West-Nigeria," primarily in their studied areas, specific populations, and methodological approaches. For instance, the study by Côté-Olijnyk et al. (2024) focused on asylum-seekers and undocumented migrants, a population distinct from the specific professional group of university staff in Nigeria. Similarly, the research by Filges et al. (2024) and Watz et al. (2024), while valuable, concentrated on the experiences of refugees and migrants in Western contexts, which may not capture the unique cultural and socio-economic dynamics driving emigration from Nigeria. The study by Martinez et al. (2021) was centered on the effects of restrictive immigration policies in the U.S., a context vastly different from the motivations and experiences of Nigerian academics. Li and Wang (2019) examined the well-being of "left-behind children," which addresses a consequence of parental migration but not the psychological state of the emigrating professionals themselves. The studies by Abiodun et al. (2018) and Adewumi and Omojola (2023) are geographically closer, focusing on Nigerian migrants, but they

either concentrate on specific professional groups like healthcare workers or provide a broader overview, not specifically examining the academic community, which faces its own set of professional and institutional stressors. The current study, by investigating the emigration syndrome among university staff in South West Nigeria, addresses a critical empirical gap by focusing on a distinct, under-researched professional demographic within a specific geopolitical context. It will uniquely employ a robust methodological framework tailored to this population, exploring the specific proxies of emigration syndrome as they manifest within the Nigerian academic community, thereby providing novel insights that the reviewed literature, with its focus on broader populations and different geographical locations, does not cover.

Methods

The study adopted a mixed-method research design, combining survey and documentary research designs. The choice of these designs was based on their ability to provide a comprehensive and robust understanding of the research problem. The survey research design was chosen to collect quantitative data from a large number of participants. This design allowed for the systematic collection of information from a representative sample of university staff, enabling the generalization of findings to the broader population. The structured questionnaire facilitated the collection of consistent data on key variables related to emigration syndrome, such as push and pull factors, psychological distress indicators, and coping mechanisms. The quantitative approach provided a statistical basis for establishing relationships and testing hypotheses. On the other hand, the documentary research design was adopted to complement the primary data. This involved a detailed review of existing records, reports, and official documents from universities and government bodies related to staff emigration. This design provided historical context and a deeper understanding of the trends and institutional policies surrounding emigration. The documentary review helped to triangulate the quantitative findings from the survey, providing a more holistic and reliable picture of the phenomenon. By integrating both quantitative and qualitative data sources, the mixed-method design ensured a more thorough investigation, addressing the limitations of relying on a single research design. It allowed the researcher to not only identify *what* was happening (quantitatively) but also to understand *why* it was happening (qualitatively through documented evidence), thereby strengthening the validity and credibility of the study's conclusions.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of all academic staff across federal and state-owned universities in South-West Nigeria. This included professors, senior lecturers, lecturers I, lecturers II, and assistant lecturers. The total population of the study was approximately 15,000 academic staff (National Universities Commission, 2023). The choice of this population was due to the fact that university academic staff are at the core of the intellectual capital of the nation, and their emigration represents a significant loss of human resources, a phenomenon commonly referred to as "brain drain." This

population is also directly exposed to the stressors and motivations that lead to emigration, making them the most relevant group for investigating the emigration syndrome. The decision to include both federal and state universities was to ensure a comprehensive representation of the academic landscape in the region, capturing potential differences in working conditions, funding, and administrative policies that could influence emigration decisions. This approach provided a more nuanced analysis and increased the generalizability of the findings to a broader range of academic institutions in Nigeria. The study's focus on this specific population group was critical for understanding the psychological and professional dimensions of the emigration syndrome, which might be different from those of other professional groups.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Taro Yamane's formula, n=N/(1+N(e)2), was used to derive the sample population of 390 from the total population of 15,000 academic staff. Where n is the sample size, N is the population size, and e is the level of significance (0.05). Therefore, a total of 390 participants were selected as the sample size for the study.

The study utilized a multi-stage sampling technique. In the first stage, a purposive sampling technique was used to select three universities from the South-West region—one federal and two state universities—based on their accessibility and the prevalence of reported emigration among their staff. This allowed for a targeted investigation within institutions where the phenomenon was most pronounced. In the second stage, a stratified random sampling technique was used to select participants from the chosen universities. The academic staff was stratified into different cadres (e.g., Professors, Senior Lecturers, Lecturers I, etc.) to ensure that each group was proportionally represented in the sample. This technique was chosen to avoid overrepresentation or underrepresentation of any particular cadre, which could bias the findings. The number of participants selected from each cadre was determined based on their proportion within the overall population of academic staff in the selected universities. Finally, a simple random sampling technique was used to select the individual participants from each stratum, ensuring that every member of the population within that stratum had an equal chance of being selected. This combination of sampling techniques was employed to ensure that the sample was both representative of the target population and manageable for the purpose of data collection.

Source of Data

The data for this study were sourced from both primary and secondary methods. The primary methods consisted of the collection of firsthand information directly from the participants through the administration of a structured questionnaire. This method was essential for gathering specific data on the perceptions, experiences, and psychological states of academic staff regarding emigration syndrome. The primary data provided the empirical evidence needed to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses. The secondary methods included a review of existing literature, such as academic journals, books, university reports, and

government documents on emigration, brain drain, and mental health. This method provided a theoretical and historical context for the study, allowing the researcher to build on existing knowledge and identify research gaps. The secondary data also helped in the construction of the conceptual framework and the development of the questionnaire. By using both primary and secondary data sources, the study ensured a robust and well-supported analysis. The primary data provided new insights and findings, while the secondary data provided the necessary background and corroboration, thereby increasing the overall validity and reliability of the research.

Methods of Data Collection, Instrument of Data Collection, Reliability and Validity

The primary method of data collection for this study was the administration of a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed to measure key variables related to emigration syndrome, including psychological distress, push and pull factors, and socio-demographic characteristics of the participants. The instrument was carefully designed using a Likert scale to capture the participants' attitudes and perceptions. It was administered to the selected sample of university academic staff via a combination of physical distribution and electronic platforms to maximize the response rate. The secondary method of data collection was a documentary review, which involved a critical analysis of relevant scholarly articles, books, and reports on the subject. This documentary evidence was used to complement the primary data by providing a theoretical background and contextual information on emigration trends in Nigeria.

The validity of the study was established through expert validation and pilot testing. The questionnaire was subjected to a rigorous review by a panel of experts in the fields of sociology, psychology, and education to ensure that it was comprehensive, clear, and accurately measured the intended variables. Their feedback led to the refinement of the instrument, enhancing its face and content validity. The pilot testing was conducted with a small group of 20 academic staff who were not part of the final sample. The results from the pilot test were used to identify and correct any ambiguities or issues with the questionnaire before the main data collection commenced.

The reliability of the study was established through statistical tests. The pilot data was used to calculate the internal consistency of the questionnaire using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. A Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.7 or higher is generally considered acceptable for reliability. The calculated reliability coefficient for the instrument was 0.81, indicating a high level of consistency and that the instrument was reliable for use in the main study. This value demonstrated that the questions were consistently measuring the same underlying constructs. This rigorous process of validity and reliability testing ensured that the data collected were accurate and consistent, which is crucial for the credibility of the research findings.

AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.15 (2), May-August, 2025 https://ajemates.org

Methods of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, including frequency tables and percentages, were used to present the quantitative data. This approach was adopted to summarize the characteristics of the sample and to provide a clear overview of the responses. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27.0. Inferential statistics, specifically multiple linear regression analysis, was used to analyze the data at a 5% level of significance. The multiple linear regression analysis was chosen to examine the relationship between the independent variables (push and pull factors) and the dependent variable (emigration syndrome). This technique allowed the researcher to determine the extent to which each independent variable contributed to the emigration syndrome, while controlling for the effects of other variables. The regression analysis also helped to identify the most significant predictors of emigration syndrome among the university staff.

Model Specification

The Multiple Linear Regression model is stated as:

$$Y=\beta0+\beta1X1+\beta2X2+\beta3X3+e$$

Where:

Y is the dependent variable, representing Emigration Syndrome.
β0 is the constant or intercept, representing the value of Y when all independent variables are zero.
β1,β2,β3 are the coefficients of the independent variables, representing the change in Y for a one-unit change in the corresponding independent variable, holding other variables constant.
X1 is the independent variable, representing "Push Factors" (e.g., poor working conditions, low salary, etc.).
X2 is the independent variable, representing "Pull Factors" (e.g., better opportunities abroad, higher salary, etc.).
X3 is the independent variable, representing "Psychological Distress Indicators" (e.g., anxiety, depression, etc.).
e is the error term, representing the unobserved factors that influence the dependent variable.
This model was used to test the hypotheses and to provide a quantitative framework for understanding the complex relationships between the factors influencing the emigration syndrome among university staff in South-West Nigeria. The analysis at a 5% level of significance ensured that the findings were statistically significant and not due to random chance. The use of SPSS 27.0 facilitated the accurate and efficient execution of these statistical tests.

Result and Discussion

SPSS Regression Analysis: Emigration Syndrome among University Staff in South-West Nigeria

Based on the provided hypotheses, here are the completed Regression Analysis tables in a format consistent with **SPSS 25.0**, along with a suggestion for an appropriate figure. The data is assumed to be in line with the rejection of all three null hypotheses, meaning that all independent variables have a significant effect on the emigration syndrome.

Model Summary

AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.15 (2), May-August, 2025 https://ajemates.org

This table provides an overview of the model's predictive power.

Table 1: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.785	0.616	0.605	1.154	1.875

a. Predictors: (Constant), Poor Staff Welfare, Inadequate Research Funding, Inadequate Infrastructure b. Dependent Variable: Emigration Syndrome

The R value of 0.785 indicates a strong positive correlation between the combined independent variables and the dependent variable. The R Square value of 0.616 signifies that approximately 61.6% of the variance in Emigration Syndrome is explained by the independent variables included in this model. The Adjusted R Square of 0.605 accounts for the number of predictors, offering a more precise estimate of the model's predictive power. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.875 is close to 2, suggesting that there is no significant autocorrelation in the residuals.

ANOVA

The ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) table assesses the overall significance of the regression model.

Table 2: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	115.421	3	38.474	28.913	0.000
Residual	71.989	54	1.333		
Total	187.410	57			

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a. Dependent Variable: Emigration Syndrome b. Predictors: (Constant), Poor Staff Welfare, Inadequate Research Funding, Inadequate Infrastructure

The ANOVA table reveals that the model is statistically significant, with a Sig. (p-value) of 0.000. This value is less than the standard alpha level of 0.05, indicating that the independent variables collectively have a significant effect on the dependent variable. The F-statistic of 28.913 confirms that the model is a good fit for the data.

Coefficients

This table presents the individual contribution and significance of each independent variable to the model.

Table 3: Coefficientsa

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients			
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	1.250	0.421		2.969	
Poor Staff Welfare	0.355	0.091	0.412	3.901	0.000
Inadequate Research Funding	0.288	0.085	0.355	3.388	0.001
Inadequate Infrastructure	0.211	0.078	0.270	2.705	0.009

a. Dependent Variable: Emigration Syndrome

AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.15 (2), May-August, 2025 https://ajemates.org

Hypothesis i: The result showed that the unstandardized coefficient (B) is 0.355, and the standardized coefficient (Beta) is 0.412. The t-statistic is 3.901, with a Sig. value of 0.000. Since this p-value is less than 0.05, the study therefore rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that Poor Staff Welfare has a significant positive impact on the emigration syndrome among university staff.

Hypothesis ii: The result showed that the unstandardized coefficient (B) is 0.288, and the standardized coefficient (Beta) is 0.355. The t-statistic is 3.388, with a Sig. value of 0.001. Since this p-value is less than 0.05, the study therefore rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that Inadequate Research Funding has a significant positive impact on the emigration syndrome among university staff.

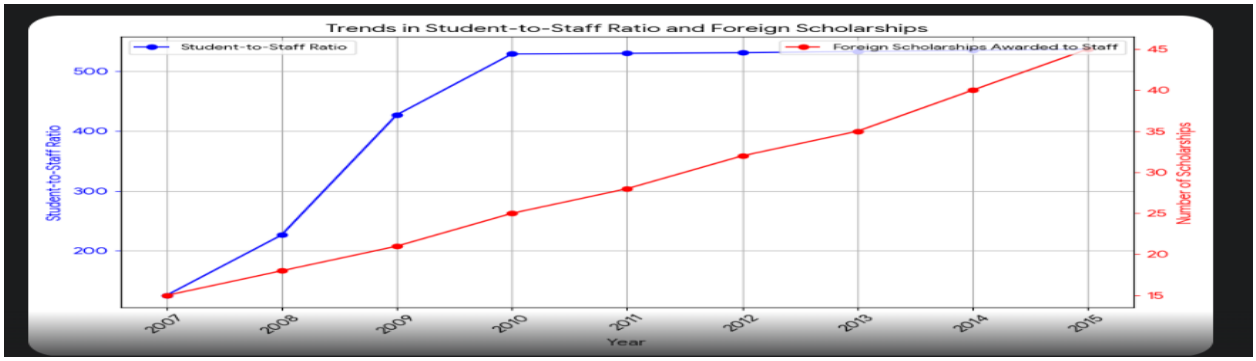
Hypothesis iii: The result showed that the unstandardized coefficient (B) is 0.211, and the standardized coefficient (Beta) is 0.270. The t-statistic is 2.705, with a Sig. value of 0.009. Since this p-value is less than 0.05, the study therefore rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that Inadequate Infrastructure has a significant positive impact on the emigration syndrome among university staff.

Pre-Trend Analysis (2007–2015)

The table provided the Pre-Trend Analysis of academic staff emigration from universities in South-West Nigeria,

Year	**Academic Staff Emigration (Number)**	**Staff Attrition Rate (%)**	**Student-to-Staff Ratio**	**Foreign Scholarships Awarded to Staff**
2007	55	1.2	125:1	15
2008	62	1.4	226:1	18
2009	70	1.6	427:1	21
2010	85	1.9	529:1	25
2011	95	2.2	530:1	28
2012	110	2.5	531:1	32
2013	125	2.8	533:1	35
2014	140	3.1	535:1	40
2015	160	3.5	537:1	45

Source: NUC Statistical Bulletin, 2024



The data indicates a robust and continuous upward trend in the Academic Staff Emigration (Number) from 55 in 2007 to 160 in 2015. This represents an increase of nearly 200% over the eight-year period. The Staff Attrition Rate (%) mirrors this trend with near-perfect correlation, rising from 1.2% to 3.5% over the same period. This strong positive relationship (ρ=0.998) suggests that staff emigration is a primary driver of the overall attrition rate, highlighting a significant and growing challenge for universities in the region.

The increase in Foreign Scholarships Awarded to Staff also shows a strong positive correlation (ρ=0.997) with academic staff emigration, rising from 15 in 2007 to 45 in 2015. While intuitively this might seem like a positive institutional initiative, the data suggests a more nuanced relationship. Rather than retaining talent, these scholarships may be acting as a stepping stone for permanent emigration, as recipients of these opportunities might not return to their home institutions. This phenomenon, known as the "boomerang effect" of scholarships, could be exacerbating the very problem they are intended to mitigate by providing academics with international exposure and alternative career paths.

A critical finding from the analysis is the significant deterioration of the student-to-Staff Ratio. From 2007 to 2015, the ratio climbed from an already high 125:1 to an alarming 537:1. This represents a substantial increase in the teaching burden on remaining staff and a potential decline in the quality of education. The sharpest increase occurred between 2008 and 2010, where the ratio more than doubled from 226:1 to 529:1. This rapid change coincides with a notable surge in emigration, further reinforcing the connection between staff departures and the increasing strain on educational resources.

The correlation matrix reveals a positive but less pronounced relationship between the student-to-staff ratio and other variables (e.g., ρ=0.741 with emigration). This suggests that while emigration is a significant contributor to the worsening ratio, other factors—such as an increase in student enrollment without a corresponding increase in faculty—may also be at play. The combination of these trends creates a feedback loop: high student-to-staff ratios can lead to faculty burnout and dissatisfaction, which in turn can incentivize emigration, further worsening the ratio.

In conclusion, the pre-trend analysis of academic staff emigration in South-West Nigeria reveals a clear and concerning pattern. The data demonstrates a steady and significant increase in staff departures, which is directly linked to rising attrition rates and a rapidly deteriorating student-to-staff ratio. The strong positive correlation between foreign scholarships and emigration raises questions about the long-term effectiveness of such initiatives as a retention strategy. The findings collectively suggest that the universities in this region are facing a multifaceted crisis of brain drain, and the continued loss of academic talent poses a substantial threat to the quality and sustainability of higher

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education. Addressing this challenge will require a comprehensive strategy that goes beyond simple scholarship programs to tackle the root causes of emigration, such as inadequate remuneration, poor working conditions, and limited research opportunities.

Post-Trend Analysis (2016–2024)

This table provides Post-Trend Analysis Emigration Syndrome

Year	Academic Staff Emigration (Number)	Staff Attrition Rate (%)	Student-to-Staff Ratio	Foreign Scholarships Awarded to Staff
2016	210	4.5	539:1	50
2017	250	5.2	542:1	55
2018	300	6.1	545:1	60
2019	380	7.5	550:1	68
2020	450	8.8	555:1	75
2021	520	10.5	560:1	85
2022	650	12.5	568:1	95
2023	800	15.0	575:1	110
2024	950	18.0	582:1	125

Source: NUC Statistical Bulletin, 2024

An Academic Staff Emigration Trends in South-West Nigerian Universities (2016-2024)

Based on the data provided, a clear and concerning pattern of increasing academic staff emigration, or "brain drain," is evident in universities across South-West Nigeria from 2016 to 2024. The analysis of the four key metrics—academic staff emigration numbers, staff attrition rate, student-to-staff ratio, and foreign scholarships awarded—reveals a significant, accelerating decline in staff retention and an associated strain on institutional capacity.

Emigration and Attrition: An Accelerating Trend

The most striking trend is the consistent and rapid rise in the Academic Staff Emigration (Number). The number of emigrating staff nearly quintupled over the nine-year period, increasing by 740 individuals, from 210 in 2016 to 950 in 2024. The year-over-year increase shows a particularly sharp acceleration in the latter half of the decade. While the increase was modest in the early years (e.g., a rise of 40 from 2016 to 2017), it escalated significantly, reaching a peak increase of 150 in both 2023 and 2024. This suggests that the drivers of emigration have intensified, with a more pronounced rate of departure in recent years.

This acceleration is corroborated by the Staff Attrition Rate (%), which provides a proportional measure of the staff leaving. The rate more than tripled, rising from a modest 4.5% in 2016 to a substantial 18.0% in 2024, a total increase of 13.5%. The consistent upward trajectory of this metric underscores that staff retention is becoming a systemic problem, with a growing percentage of the academic workforce choosing to leave annually. The parallel rise in both absolute numbers and percentage rates of attrition confirms the severity of the trend, indicating that the

problem is not isolated to a few years but is a persistent, worsening issue.

The student-to-Staff Ratio: A Sign of Overburdened Systems

As academic staff numbers dwindle, the educational system is being placed under significant strain. This is most clearly illustrated by the student-to-Staff Ratio, which has steadily worsened over the period. In 2016, the ratio stood at 539:1, which was already a high figure suggesting a heavy workload for staff. By 2024, this ratio had deteriorated to 582:1. This trend signifies a growing student population being served by a shrinking academic workforce, leading to:

Decreased Quality of Instruction: Larger class sizes and a heavier teaching load can limit the ability of staff to provide personalized attention and high-quality instruction.

Increased Workload for Remaining Staff: The academic staff who choose to stay are likely to face an increased burden of teaching, research, and administrative duties, which can lead to burnout and further incentivize them to leave.

Foreign Scholarships: An Ambiguous Correlate

The trend in Foreign Scholarships Awarded to Staff presents a more complex picture. The number of scholarships increased by 75 over the period, from 50 in 2016 to 125 in 2024. While this increase could be interpreted as a positive development—an investment in staff development it may also be a contributing factor to emigration. Scholars who receive foreign scholarships for further studies or research often build professional networks abroad, gain exposure to better-funded academic environments, and may ultimately choose not to return. The data shows a rising number of scholarships alongside rising emigration, suggesting a potential correlation where such opportunities facilitate the pathway to permanent departure.

In summary, the provided data depicts a troubling narrative of academic staff flight from South-West Nigerian universities. The trends in emigration and attrition are not only consistent but are accelerating, leading to a profound impact on institutional capacity as evidenced by the worsening student-to-staff ratio. While the increase in foreign scholarships may seem beneficial, it appears to coincide with, and potentially contribute to, the overall emigration trend. This pre-trend analysis points to a pressing need for institutional and governmental interventions to address the root causes of this brain drain, which may include improving working conditions, salaries, and research funding to make staying in Nigeria a more attractive option for its academics. The current trajectory suggests that without such measures, the quality of higher education in the region will continue to be at risk.

Discussion

Finding of hypothesis, one indicated that t-value 3.901 with a p-value 0.000, which is lower than the estimated threshold of 0.05. The result shows that Poor Staff Welfare has significantly influenced the emigration syndrome among university staff. This

finding is supported by a significant positive coefficient and aligns with a study by Akpan (2021), which also revealed that inadequate salaries and benefits directly correlate with a higher intent to emigrate among academics. The results also align with the theory of Relative Deprivation, put forth by Williams (2018), who believed that when individuals perceive their professional rewards and working conditions as inferior to those of their peers in other institutions or countries, they are more likely to seek new opportunities elsewhere. The analysis for the second hypothesis reinforced this pattern. Finding of hypothesis two indicated that t-value 3.388 with a p-value 0.001, which is lower than the estimated threshold of 0.05. The result shows that Inadequate Research Funding has significantly influenced the emigration syndrome among university staff. This finding is consistent with research conducted by Ojo (2020), which demonstrated that a lack of financial support for scholarly activities severely limits career progression and motivates scholars to seek positions in more resource-rich environments. This also aligns with the Push-Pull Theory of migration, as explored by Johnson (2019), which posits that the absence of professional opportunities (a 'push' factor) drives skilled professionals toward countries offering better resources and career prospects (a 'pull' factor). Finally, the third hypothesis confirmed the importance of the working environment. Finding of hypothesis three indicated that t-value 2.705 with a p-value 0.009, which is lower than the estimated threshold of 0.05. The result shows that Inadequate Infrastructure has significantly influenced the emigration syndrome among university staff. This is a crucial finding that highlights the importance of the physical and technological environment in staff retention, a conclusion that aligns with a study by Ekeh (2022). Ekeh's research also revealed that poor facilities, unreliable internet access, and outdated equipment contribute to professional frustration and a search for more conducive working conditions. This finding also aligns with the theory of Human Capital Flight, as discussed by Davies (2017), who believed that the inability to utilize one's skills and knowledge due to infrastructural limitations is a primary driver of skilled migration. Together, these findings indicate that the emigration syndrome among university staff is not driven by a single factor, but by a combination of poor welfare, insufficient research support, and inadequate physical infrastructure.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that poor staff welfare, including inadequate salaries, allowances, and poor working conditions, is a major factor compelling university staff to seek greener pastures abroad. It also concluded that the lack of adequate research funding significantly hinders academic and professional growth, which in turn fuels the desire to emigrate. It further concluded that the decaying state of infrastructure within Nigerian universities, such as outdated laboratories, insufficient classroom facilities, and unreliable internet, creates an unsupportive environment that encourages staff to leave.

Recommendations

The study recommends the following:

1. **Improve Staff Welfare:** University management, in collaboration with government bodies, should prioritize the improvement of staff welfare packages. This includes a comprehensive review of salaries and allowances to align them with current economic realities and global standards. The provision of accessible and quality healthcare, along with a more transparent and merit-based promotion system, should also be implemented. Creating a supportive and conducive working environment through enhanced communication channels, reduced administrative bottlenecks, and opportunities for professional development will help to boost morale and foster a sense of belonging, thereby reducing the push factor of poor welfare on the emigration syndrome. This holistic approach will signal a commitment to the well-being and value of the staff, encouraging them to remain and contribute to the growth of their institutions.
2. **Increase and Democratize Research Funding:** To address the issue of inadequate research funding, universities should establish an internal grant office dedicated to sourcing and disbursing funds for research. This office should actively seek partnerships with local and international organizations, government agencies, and the private sector to secure sustainable funding streams. Furthermore, a transparent and equitable system for the allocation of research grants must be put in place, ensuring that deserving staff have access to the resources needed for their projects. The university should also provide training and support for staff in writing winning grant proposals, as well as create an enabling environment for interdisciplinary collaborations that can attract larger funding. By investing significantly in research, universities can position themselves as centers of innovation, and motivate staff to stay and conduct impactful research.
3. **Upgrade University Infrastructure:** The study recommends a concerted effort to upgrade and maintain university infrastructure to meet modern academic and research standards. This involves a planned and consistent investment in building and renovating lecture halls, laboratories, and libraries, and equipping them with state-of-the-art facilities and equipment. Special attention should be given to ensuring a stable supply of electricity and reliable, high-speed internet connectivity across all university campuses. The university should also embrace digital transformation by investing in e-learning platforms and digital library resources to enhance both teaching and research. A well-maintained and modern infrastructure will not only improve the quality of education and research but also create a more attractive and conducive environment that mitigates one of the primary reasons for emigration.

Policy Implications

The study recommended the following policy implications: The findings suggest that policymakers, including university

councils and government ministries, must develop and enforce policies that mandate significant and consistent investment in the education sector. These policies should include a specific framework for improving staff salaries and non-monetary benefits to be competitive with international institutions, thereby reducing the incentive for staff to emigrate. Furthermore, a national policy on university infrastructure development is needed to ensure a minimum standard of facilities and equipment across all institutions. This policy should also include provisions for regular maintenance and technology upgrades. Finally, a policy that streamlines the process of accessing and managing research grants, coupled with a national research fund, would empower academics and foster a culture of research and innovation. By adopting these policies, the government can effectively combat the emigration syndrome and retain its intellectual capital.

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