



## Research Article

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# Emerging Dynamics in Tourism Industry Workforce Mobility in Southern Cross River State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

*The challenge of brain drain/workforce mobility/out-migration in tourism and hospitality industry workforce is a rising phenomenon. The study investigated the factors responsible for the emerging dynamics in tourism industry workforce mobility in Southern Cross River, Nigeria. Data was generated through the administration of structured questionnaire and oral interviews on the staff and workforce of tourism industry. The results revealed that on aggregate, a total of 63.50% workers had intentions to migrate from their job while 36.50% workers had no intention to migrate from their current job. Further findings revealed that low remuneration, unfavourable working hours, stress, lack of career prospects, lack of job security, unsatisfactory working conditions, health risk, and challenge of job matching were among the reasons for job out-migration among the industry workforce. The study recommended that both public and private sectors should create enabling tourism work-environment for retention of tourism employees.*

**Keywords:** Labour, Out-migration, Tourism industry, Nigeria

## 1. Introduction

Labour out-migration is a salient but latent monster negatively affecting the tourism industry. Its impact on the industry and individuals seems to have attracted little scholarly studies in recent years. Migratory studies have over the years devoted time to labourforce movement for greener pastures and other issues but little attention to workforce mobility, hence, there is scanty scholarly output on workforce mobility.

Labour migration take different dimensions over space and time. It could be localized, regionalized or internationalized, depending on the push and pull factors. Skills differentials and age groupings are believed to have greater influence among the factors influencing migratory patterns of the workforce in tourism and hospitality (Alonso, 2015; Baum, 2002).

In the tourism and hospitality industry, highly skilled workforce for authentic and competent service delivery is always in high demand. Whether it is transportation, lodging services or the supply of food, drink or entertainment, the tourism and hospitality industry is expected to have the best of manpower due to the multifaceted needs of guests and the skilling requirements. However, the predisposition and tendency of the workforce to move is often unpredictable. The unanswered question is, why is the workforce unstable? Why is manpower unable to maintain a balance

consistently?

The mobility of labour within or outside the tourism industry is one of the rising phenomena in the tourism literature (Velciu, 2017). Although insatiability of human species makes humans dynamic and adventurous in search of greener pastures, there has been a bleak vision of mobility, particularly, in tourism and hospitality. This study was designed to investigate the pattern of labour mobility within the tourism and hospitality workforce; the reasons for such mobility; and its impact on the tourism and hospitality industry in Cross River State.

Indeed, interaction of things generally in space is critical just as workforce mobility is an important concept in all organizations. People move, information flows, goods and services move and generally, things keep moving even for the sake of moving (Adeyemo and Arokoyu, 2002; Eni and Abua, 2006). The mobility of labour is akin to the circulation of blood in the human system, labour circulates between points of lethargy and need to satisfy service demand. Circulation of labour is the movement of human resources with requisite experiences, skills and competences to attend to the diverse needs of guests in the tourism and hospitality (Goodridge, 2001).

The need for friendly and warm welcome, treatment grew over time with human societies. Retaining competence as workforce management requirement of human resources is one of the most challenging issues in the tourism and hospitality industry (Laakso-Manninen & Viitala, 2007). Other factors such as insensitivity to career progression and development, work-family balance, and working conditions have been identified (Dodani and LaPorte, 2005; Liu, 2018). What the future holds for the tourism and hospitality industry is largely determined by the capacity of managers to retain competent workforce in a sustainable manner (Scot, 2015).

Substantial studies on tourism and livelihoods, tourism and socio-economic development, tourism development drivers and their impacts on destination development (Obong, Effiom, and Okon, 2012; Obong, Ajake, Aniah, Uttah and Ukam, 2015; Obong, Atsa and Abang, 2017; Obong and Etim, 2019) but little (Živković, Živković, and Tmušić, 2013; Bustamama, Tenga and Abdullah, 2014; Cheng and Lai, 2017) of both financial and non-financial reward system have been documented on tourism workforce mobility in the study area. As reported by Obong and Etim (2019), huge opportunities for employment and other social benefits are associated with tourism, especially in the Calabar Region, hence, the possibility of workforce mobility. Critical to the tourism and hospitality industry is its workforce (Howison, 2011).

Literature attributes tourism industry success to the quality of human resource in terms of education, experience, competence on the job, recognition and reward system (Baum, 2002; Alfandi and Alkawsaneh, 2014). However, a number of issues makes the industry volatile for its workforce to stay (Hughes and Rog, 2008; Honore, 2009; Howison, 2011), making it challenging for tourism and hospitality managers to retain its workforce, such as conditions of service, health issues, remuneration, motivation, job matching (Tesone and Ricci, 2005; Houlfort, Fernet, Vallerand, Laframboise, Guay and Koestner, 2015; Velciu, 2017). The discoveries of Aynalem, Birhanu, and Tesefay (2016) on employment opportunities and challenges in the tourism and hospitality industry was devoid of workforce mobility as a challenge to be tackled. The behavioural pattern of the workforce in the study area is the focused of this study to x-ray its mobility intentions.

## 2. Methodology

The survey design was adopted for the study, in the Southern Cross River State, Nigeria. Southern Cross River State is made up of Calabar South, Calabar Municipality, Akpabuyo, Bakassi, Odukpani, Akamkpa, and Biase Local Government Areas (LGAs). The area lies between longitudes  $5^{\circ} 05'$  and  $6^{\circ} 20'$ ; and latitudes  $8^{\circ} 15'$  and  $9^{\circ} 30'$ . The government of Cross River State created tourism-focused institutions with the responsibility of developing and administrating tourism activities in attraction centers and overseeing the operations of private tourism institutions. Tourism institutions constitute the focus of the study.

The institutions include Cross River State Signage and Advertisement agency (CRISSAA), the

Department of Public Transportation (DOPT), Carnival Commission, Department of Tourism Development, and Cross River State Tourism Bureau. Others were the Calabar Botanic Garden and Conservation Centre, the Kwa Falls, the Marina Tourism Resort, food, beverage and shopping services. The study comprised of a total population of 2,238 tourism and tourism related staff, out of which 840 (37.5%) was randomly sampled for questionnaire administration. A check list was used to interview some people from unstructured tourism workers including outside fares, bukkas and pubs, arts and crafts.

During questionnaire administration, the tourism related institutions were visited and the contact persons (Directors of Administration and Human Resource Managers or designated officers) gave appropriate days to visits and administer the questionnaire. Because these institutions are field oriented, contact persons requested that the questionnaire be placed with them and be retrieved after completion. Some of the contact persons explained that their staff are filed staff and could not be met in their offices for the administration of questionnaires. Some respondents demanded for the instrument to be left with them to be retrieved later, while some returned the same day. For better understanding of the study, data generated was analyzed and presented in tables, charts, graphs, percentages and other appropriate graphic illustrations.

### 3. Results and Discussion of Findings

Data generated from the field are presented and discussed accordingly. The study identified the nature of employment available in the tourism and hospitality industry in the study area. It was discovered that three major categories of employment exist, ranging from full-time employment (76.99%), part-time employment (20.55%), casual labour (2.15%) and others (0.31% representing workforce on secondment), Table 1.

**Table 1:** Type of employment in the tourism industry

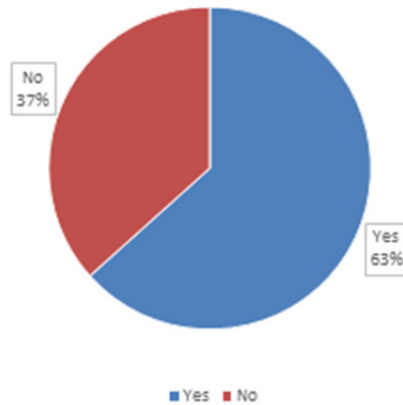
S/N	Type of employment	Frequency	Percentage
1	Full-Time	502	76.99
2	Part-Time	134	20.55
3	Casual	14	2.15
4	*Others	2	0.31
	<b>Total</b>	<b>652</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Secondment

**Source:** Field survey, 2018

Job change intentions among tourism industry workers generated from accommodation establishments; food, beverage and shops; government institutions; attractions and carnival bands, generated from the field is presented in Table 1. In aggregate, a total of 414 workers representing 63.50% have intentions to change their job while 238 workers representing 36.50% have no intention to change their job (Fig.1).

Do you intend to change job?



**Figure 1:** Job change intention among tourism industry workforce

**Source:** Field survey, 2018

**4. Reasons for Out-Migration from Current Job**

Further analysis was made on the 63 per cent workforce with job change intentions. A brighter light was shed as represented in Table 1. A myriad of reasons for workforce out-migration in the tourism and hospitality industry was revealed. The highest percentage (17.39%) is attributed to job insecurity, followed by stress and unfavourable working hours with 15.46% and 14.49% respectively. Again, issues of low remuneration 12.56%, no career prospects and others 12.08%, health risk 10.14%, unsatisfactory working conditions 5.80% leaves the workforce with intentions to migrate out of their present job.

**Table 2:** Reasons for workforce mobility among tourism industry workers

S/N	Reason(s)	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	Low remuneration	52	12.56
2	Unfavourable working hours	60	14.49
3	Stress	64	15.46
4	No career prospects	50	12.08
5	No job security	72	17.39
6	Unsatisfactory working conditions	24	5.80
7	Health risk	42	10.14
8	Others	50	12.08
	Total	414	100

**Source:** Field survey, 2018

Further findings on the 50 respondents representing 12.08% (Table 2) shows that 13(26%) of the workforce are not satisfied with their present job, 9(18%) complain of no salary increment, 7(14%) job does not match with their qualification, 6(12%) indicating unsafe conditions, 5(10%) considered their job placements below their expectations, while 3(6%) each representing no compensation, long working hours and no incentives. One (2%) of the workforce under other reasons complained of poor infrastructure demanding improvisation all the time making the work stressful.

**Table 3:** ‘Others’ reasons for workforce mobility among tourism industry workers

S/N	Reason(s)	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	No satisfaction	13	26
2	Job mismatch	7	14
3	No corresponding salary increments	9	18
4	No compensation	3	6
5	Job placement below expectation	5	10
6	Poor infrastructure/amenities	1	2
7	Unsafe working conditions	6	12
8	Long working hours	3	6
9	No increments	3	6
	Total	50	100

**Source:** Field survey, 2018

Oral interviews revealed that inexperience or incompetent managers impact negatively on workforce retention. A situation where a manager becomes a bully and maltreating workers will cause the workforce unable to cope with such managers to change their jobs. Others that were identified include lack of motivation through recognition and reward for meeting targets or exceeding targets. Where reward system is not part of an organization it has a way of forcing a workforce to migrate to better places. The above aligns with Cheng and Lai (2017) findings on workforce willingness to stay where training and reward system operates; and that of Bustamama, Tenga and Abdullah (2014) and Živković, Živković, and Tmušić (2013) on financial and non-financial reward system for workforce management and retention. It was also gathered from interviews that some workforce dwindles when they consider that some of their colleagues were unfairly dismissed.

Findings of this study reveals that a huge percentage of the industry’s workforce (63.50%) have intentions to change their job, while 36.50% of the workforce have no intention to change their job. Identified reasons for job change intentions ranges from job insecurity (17.39%), stress (15.46%), unfavourable working hours (14.49%), remuneration (12.56%), issues of career prospects (12.08%), health risk (10.14%), issues satisfaction (9.18%), to job not matching their educational qualification (2.90%), the findings collaborate with those of Tesone and Ricci (2005). The implication of this finding is that even though a significant population of workers desires to develop their career in the tourism sector, unfavourable conditions will force them to move to other opportunities or regions, thus, negatively affecting the workforce and the success of the industry generally.

Providing job security against all forms of lay-off and high propensity of firing staff have a way of building confidence for career progression in the industry.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

Tourism workforce play a critical role in the industry success story. But the challenge of workforce mobility occasioned by different salient factors such as job insecurity, stress, unfavourable working hours, remuneration, issues of career prospects, health risk, issues of job satisfaction, to job not matching their educational qualification, unraveled by this study need to be tactically addressed. From the findings of the study, it is recommended that both public and private sectors should create enabling tourism work-environment for career progression, managers’ capacity building in workforce management and retention of tourism employees.

Providing a reward system of both financial and nonfinancial reward system will be an important motivation to performance. Addressing the recommendations is to prepare for a successful tourism future.

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