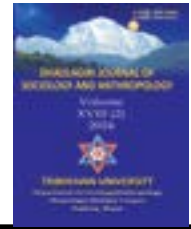


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# Why do they not want to go back home? A perspective of African graduates in the United States

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**Abstract**

This study aims to explore and examine why some African graduates decide to remain in the United States after completing their studies, when they stand a good chance to secure better job opportunities when returning to their home countries because of quality education in the US. The experience of African graduates after deciding to remain in the US is also examined in this study. This is a qualitative study using an exploratory approach, through a snowball sampling method. In order to achieve its objectives, interviews were conducted through the use of social media platforms with 15 graduates from Kenya and Nigeria living in the US. The findings have that shown quality education in the US as well as its economic and political stability were the pull factors for graduates to remain in the US after completing their studies. The findings have also shown that while graduates stand a better chance to access good employment opportunities when they return home, they expressed concerns about high levels of nepotism, corruption in the employment process, and lack of infrastructure. Examining the experience of graduates after deciding to remain in the US, loneliness, lack of social support and perceived racism were among some of the experiences of African graduates in the US.

*Keywords:* international student migration, studying abroad, African graduates, United States of America

**Introduction**

In recent years, the appeal for internationally educated professionals is dramatically increasing (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2015). The number of international students has grown considerably in the early 21st century. The OECD indicates that, in 2000 the global number of students enrolled in tertiary education outside their country of citizenship was two million; by 2012 that had increased to four and a half million, representing an average annual growth of almost 7 percent (Reinold, 2018). The OECD (2023) indicated that more than 1.9 million international tertiary-level students moved to OECD countries in 2022. In 2021, a total of over 4.3 million international students were enrolled in

educational institutions in OECD countries. The major OECD destination countries in 2021 for international students were the United States of America (hosting 19% of all international students in the OECD countries), the United Kingdom (14%), Australia (9%) and Germany (9%) (OECD, 2023).

Among all groups of migrants - including labor migrants, family migrants, and refugees - international students are the fastest-growing group (Reinold, 2018). Hallberg (2019, p. 3) points out, "the increase of student mobility is a result of the internationalization of higher education". Globalization of international education has resulted in increased student mobility in the quest to exploit new educational opportunities. The increase in international student mobility is associated with a high demand for "technical, specialized, post-secondary



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education that prompts students to go abroad in search of educational opportunities that are 'better' than those available in their home country (Shield, 2013, p. 2). Nonetheless, it should be noted that international student migration is not new. In fact, as Rivza and Teichler (2007, p. 459) allude, "the history of international student mobility is significantly longer and more complex, reaching back to medieval universities".

In recent years, international education has become a major channel for the movement of highly skilled workers and "the United States has been a global leader in educating students from other countries around the world for a long time" (Banjong & Olson, 2016). According to Open Doors Data, the last several years have shown that study abroad participation in the United States was at an all-time high and continues to grow (Institute of International Education [IIE] Open Doors, 2015). Statistics for four English-speaking developed countries namely U.S., U.K., Canada, and Australia. compiled by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) indicate that, "international students participating in tertiary education increased from 451,900 in 1999 to 784,000 in 2013 in the USA, from 232,500 to 416,700 in the UK, from 117,500 to 249,900 in Australia and from 32,500 to 135,200 in Canada" (Institute for Statistics, 2012; Hou & Lu, 2017, p. 7).

The number of international students in the academic year of 2018/19 in the United States, was at an all time-high (IIE, 2015). In the 2022/23 academic year, Korhonen (2023), reports that there were 1,057,188 international students studying in the United States. This is an increase from the previous year, when 948,519 international students were studying in the United States. Blain (2023) adds that this growth marks a remarkable 12% year-over-year increase as it is the fastest in over 40 years, not only highlighting the adaptability of the U.S. education system but also reinforces the country's attractiveness to global students. Jibeem and Khan (2015, p.12) note that, "globally, an estimated two million students' study in other countries and it is estimated that this number will increase to a staggering 15 million students by 2025".

There are many reasons to believe that many students regard international education as "their ticket to migration" (Rizvi, 2005, p. 7). However, this mobility "has not been reciprocal, with many international students from the developing world opting to migrate to developed countries, while their counterparts" in developed countries prefer to study at home (Ardakani et al., 2002, p.8). This dynamic shows the disparities of education, economic opportunities and living standards proving the north to south migration to be a dominant pattern. Additionally, the globalization of student mobility has been turned into a huge business where students are seen as human capital and competed for by OECD countries, to attract and retain them in their host country. In fact, international education recruitment and matriculation is the fifth-largest service industry in the

United States (Institute of International Education, 2019).

Even though the extent of return migration varies considerably across countries, it depends on several factors (Tremblay, 2002; Lu et al., 2009), there is empirical evidence showing that the fraction of foreign students who stay in their host country upon graduation is substantial. In this study, the researcher looks at the overall global international student migrants who graduated in their home countries and decided to further their studies abroad. A particular focus is given to Kenyan and Nigerian graduates who decide to stay in the US after completing their university's education. Central to this study is the exploration and examination of push and pull factors and the overall experience of African graduates after deciding to remain in the US.

### Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation of this study is Rational Choice Theory (RCT). Rational choice theory's basic premise is that individuals act rationally whilst making decisions; when confronted with a dilemma, they rationally choose between a set of alternatives, within the opportunities offered or constraints imposed upon them by the environment (Simon, 1979; Scott, 2000, as cited in Sabharwal & Varma, 2016, p.178). According to Scott (2000, p. 3), "in rational choice theory, individuals are seen as motivated by the wants or goals that express their preferences". Thus, RTC is an economic principle that states that individuals always make prudent and logical decisions. Sabharwal and Varma (2016, p. 178) allude that,

Rational decision-making theory assumes that people will weigh the costs and benefits of the expected outcomes of a decision, and have all the necessary information in order to make the final choice.

They further explain that rational choice typically involves the following steps: (i) identify the problem, that is, to know what the decision would achieve; (ii) generate alternatives, that is, come up with multiple alternatives by collecting necessary information and listing pros and cons of each alternative; (iii) select a solution, that is, rank the various alternatives and their consequences in importance to select the best one; (iv) implement the solution, that is, take the action to execute the decision; and (v) evaluate the decision taken, that is, determine if the action got the desired outcome. It is proposed that the option with the highest value is selected. These decisions provide people with the greatest benefit or satisfaction given the choices available and are also in their highest self-interest (Levin & Migron, 2004).

This approach is relevant to the African graduates overseas, specifically, Nigerians and Kenyans who are reluctant to go back to their home countries after completing their studies in that, "individuals rationally decide to immigrate, by evaluating the costs and benefits and eventually choosing the option that is anticipated to

bring most earnings (Tunali, 2000). Similarly, Ryo (2013) asserts that migrating individuals are perceived as rational actors, whose decision to immigrate can result in a cost-benefit. “The current literature on international students’ postgraduate migration highlights the role of macro-level push-pull factors such as the state and its institutions, and micro-level push-pull factors such as social ties, as well as personal, economic, and professional factors” (Alberts, & Hazen, 2005, p. 2).

Conversely, Muntanyola-Saura (2014), argues that RTC does not consider any “unanticipated consequences”, given that humans are considered to be able to accurately predict the outcomes of their decisions/choices. Crossman (2020) writes that since individuals can't attain all of the various things that they want, they must make choices related to both their goals and the means for attaining those goals. satisfaction.

Therefore, these graduates are faced with the decision to either return to their home countries or continue residing in the United States. Rational Choice Theory (RCT) posits that these individuals go through a process in which they evaluate the potential costs and benefits related to each option. The decision to stay in the United States may be influenced by various determinants, including economic opportunities, professional advancement, personal security, and opportunities that are not equally accessible in their countries of origin. For instance, moving back to their countries could lead to limited employment opportunities and low salary wages, in contrast to remaining in the United States, which could yield higher income and more employment opportunities. This aligns with findings by Tunali (2000), who asserts that migration decisions are primarily based on expected earnings. The choices of these individuals reflect a rational assessment of their alternatives. In the end, rational individuals choose the course of action that is likely to give them the greatest

### **Methodological Approach**

This study utilises a qualitative interpretive approach in its analysis of the data. The aims of qualitative research are to understand some aspects of social life through exploring the experiences and attitudes of the population to be studied. Perceptions and attitudes are presented in participant’s words, rather than numbers as data for analysis (Mouton, 2001). As (Queirós et.al, p. 370) explains, “qualitative research is therefore concerned with aspects of reality that cannot be quantified, focusing on the understanding and explanation of the dynamics of social relations” Maxwell (2013) elucidates that qualitative research works with the universe of meanings, motives, aspirations, beliefs, values, and attitudes, which corresponds to a deeper space of relationships, processes, and phenomena that cannot be reduced to the operationalization of variables. Conger (1998), highlights that qualitative research is important because of its flexibility to follow unexpected ideas during

research and explore processes effectively for in-depth and longitudinal explorations of social phenomena. This method is relevant to the study since the data consists of words from participants detailing their subjective perceptions and understanding with regard to their choice to remain in the US rather than returning to their countries of origin.

In this study, the population consisted of Africans from sub-Saharan Africa, specifically Nigerians and Kenyans, both female and male, who have graduated with a masters or doctorate from universities in the U.S. and decided to stay in their host country upon completion of their studies. In addition, the target population was African graduates who had completed their masters or doctorate degree and have been staying in the U.S. for 5 years or more. However, since the population was difficult to locate, the researcher decided to include even Africans who have stayed a year or more in the host country after completing their studies.

The eligibility criteria in this study were that the participants had to be citizens in their country of origin, have graduated from any credited university in their home country, have graduated with masters or doctorate degree from any accredited University in the U.S. and have stayed a year or more in the U.S. after completion of their studies

Our sample in this study was made up of graduates from Kenya and Nigeria living in the US, both male and. Each country consisted of 7 participants. It is worth mentioning that particular focus is given to graduates who left their countries of origin to study in the US with the hope to return to their countries of origin after completing their studies. Participants are those who left with formal qualifications in their country of origin. “In order to capture diverse perspectives, and to obtain a sample of great variation, this study used the purposive sampling strategy of maximum variation sampling which is a non-probability sampling method” (Mouton, 2001, p. 166). This sampling technique aims to capture and describe the central themes and cut across a great deal of variation through diversity such as gender and age, nationality as a criterion for constructing the sample (Mouton, 2001). In addition, an online questionnaire combining both open-ended and closed questions was employed and shared through virtual networking platforms namely Facebook, Twitter and Instagram as a method of data collection to identify the targeted population that fits the criteria of the research.

On the virtual settings, the researcher searched for group pages and hashtags for example, “Nigerians in the United States” and “Kenyans in the United States”. Once the potential participants were identified in group pages or individually, the researcher contacted them by sending each a private message to check if they fit the criteria. Those participants who fit the eligibility criteria, with their consent and willingness to participate, the researcher sent them a link to fill in the online questionnaire and asked them to refer other potential participants they knew who fell under

the same criteria (online and offline). These participants also shared online questionnaire link on their social media pages. Further, some participants who were referred by other participants who the researcher had contacted through virtual networking platforms preferred to access the online questionnaire link through electronic mail. Thus, some participants would email the researcher and ask that the online survey link be sent to them, or the researcher would ask the potential participants to provide their personal email so that the online survey link is sent to them.

We analyzed data using qualitative method known as conceptual analysis which is another form of content analysis. Content analysis is a technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages (Babbie, 2001). Palmquist (1993) indicates that the process of conceptual analysis compresses eight steps namely, deciding on the level of process of analysis deciding how many concepts to code for, deciding whether to code the existence of a concept, deciding how to distinguish among concepts, developing rules for the coding texts, deciding what to do with the irrelevant information, and coding texts and analyzing results. Data was analysed manually since there were only 21 respondents. The questionnaires were printed out and the researcher followed all the above steps of conceptual content analysis. In a nutshell, narrative theme analyses were employed to find major themes and patterns in the questionnaire by looking for similarities and differences among them. These themes were derived from the objectives of the study.

Before the actual research commenced, the researchers obtained a certificate of ethical clearance from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN) Ethics Committee after they had checked that the research study materials and procedures were up to the institution's code of conduct. An informed consent form was also provided to the participants in whom they had to choose whether they want to participate or not prior to completing the online questionnaire; the participation was free and voluntary. On the informed consent form, the potential participants were provided with relevant information such as the information about the study, time it will take to fill the questionnaire and the supervisors and the researcher's contact details. In addition, the respondent's confidentiality and anonymity was respected. Thus, the participants were informed that the data collected would be kept confidential and also, they are free to stop filling in the questionnaire anytime, for any reason. The participants were also informed that they can withdraw their information by contacting the researcher. The researchers made sure that the information collected through the online survey and questionnaire does not contain any identifiable information. To protect any threats to data privacy, steps were taken to safeguard it. After the data was collected and analysed, it was stored securely on Google Drive data storage - where the files are protected with a password that only the supervisor and

the researchers can access them. Finally, the researcher acknowledged all the sources used in her research and make sure of this; the Turnitin programme was used to test the similarity index.

## Results

The aim this study was to explore and examine the pull factors that influence African graduates mainly Kenya and Nigerians to remain in the United States after completing their studies. In order to achieve the above objectives, this section focuses on three main research questions. Question one interrogates pull factor of Kenyan and Nigerian graduates to remain in the US after completing their studies. Question two highlights Kenyan and Nigerian graduate experience after deciding to remain in the US and question three, explores and examines the likelihood of graduate to stay in host country, move to another country or intention to go back home. Results are analysed in conjunction with the existing studies conducted in the same field of study to draw similarity or differences between African graduates and those in other developing countries.

### **Pull Factor of African Graduates to Remain in the US after Completing Studies**

Central to this study was to examine why Kenyan and Nigerian graduates decided to remain in the host country after completing their graduate studies. The findings have shown that various factors contributed to African graduates' decision to stay in the U.S. post-graduation. Better economic and social opportunities were among pull factors. Participants believed that the pay gap between the country of origin and host nation is wide. Excellence in the delivery of the services was also among the pull factors. Participants believed that, while the home countries provided them with education opportunities to study in a country like the US, they felt that despite prospects of good employment back in the country of origin, still the salary was too low compared to that of the US. Furthermore, participants felt that while holding a degree from the US is key in accessing quality employment, they however believed that the level of nepotism and corruption in home country will be an impedance to securing a job, hence they remain unemployed for a very long time.

Participants fear to return home as result of corruption and nepotism can also be justified by a study conducted in Nigeria by Statista in (2019). The study found that 13% of public office applicants in Nigeria accessed job through corruption or nepotism. Similarly, identity politics and political patronage in Kenya have serious implications on how private and public institutions are run (Ombanda, 2018). Equally important, the findings indicated that majority of those who migrated and decided to stay in the host country are young and they are supposed to represent the economically active group in their respective home countries, instead, they decided to stay in their host country because of the opportunities that cater for their lifestyle



and improvement of their well-being. The statement reads:

Better salary offers compared to my country', higher standard of living than my country 'excellent delivery of services than my country' and easy access of information in host country (Nigerian Participant, 2021).

It is worth mentioning the services delivery in all aspects proved to be more attracting in the US compared to country of origin. The type of education institutions where graduates studied had world renowned infrastructure and management system. This was also evident to participants. They believed that service delivery in its all forms in the country of origin is limited to some extent. For Kenya and Nigeria, like any other developing country, service delivery poses serious challenge. Lack of reliable water, electrical infrastructure and housing are major challenges. Participants were concerned with all these and felt that their return to their country of origin will contribute very little in changing current service delivery circumstances and therefore decided to remain in the US.

The findings where respondents said they decided to stay because of income differences between the host country and their home countries are also consistent with other research. In a study conducted by [Glennie and Chappel \(2010\)](#), they also found out that wages, employment, professional development, network, and socio-economic conditions are key motivators to stay in the host country. [Hooghe et al. \(2008\)](#) and [Okeke \(2012\)](#) posit that physician migration from sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has increased substantially over the past three decades. "Much of this literature agrees that the wage gaps between developing and developed countries play an important role in the migration of health professionals from developing countries" ([McCoy et al., 2008](#), as cited in [Okeke, 2014](#), p. 604).

Empirical literature estimates indicate wage gaps are quite large in developed countries compared to developing ones ([Clemens & Pettersson, 2008](#)). Additionally, [Dovlo and Martineau \(2004\)](#) go as far as to call remuneration (wages) the most important factor for retaining health workers. Evidently, the growing wage gap between African and OECD countries would continue to be an important factor in the incentive to emigrate. The general impression on the progress of African economies in generating gainful employment is so far muted. Some even go as far as to say that recent growth has been generally a jobless growth in which case the prospect for the young and the unemployed can only be found in emigration. "The demographic pressure of such magnitude could trigger waves of emigration from Africa as it narrows the resource base in the home country" ([Hatton & Willamson, 2003](#); [Shimeless, 2010](#), p. 13).

To add on the above assertions, the participants were also asked how much they earned in the host country and how much they think they would've earned in their

home countries. Their responses indicated that there is a wage gap between the host country and their home countries. Although some of them do not earn much, but the findings show that the salary they earn in the U.S. is more than what they would have been offered in their countries. Not only health professionals decide to stay in the U.S., but important group of people in critical sectors like technology, education, research, science, business and so forth stay as well. Hence there is shortage of essential manpower in Sub-Saharan Africa, and this is supported by [Naicker et al. \(2009\)](#) claiming that the "inadequate health systems of Africa, especially sub-Saharan Africa, have been badly damaged by the migration of their health professionals". Therefore, when they migrate and settle, who is going to tend to the services that their people need in their own countries? This prompts African countries to hire people from abroad who are known to be "experts" and are paid more for their skills whereas the money could pay for instance, two or three people from the same country who have acquired the same skills. Thus, if there is shortage of skilled workers in home countries, automatically the services are going to be poor, and corruption will thrive, and this is the situation in almost every Sub-Saharan country.

[Hanson \(2009\)](#) alludes that "Africa is widely considered among the world's most corrupt places, a factor seen as contributing to the stunted development and impoverishment of many African states" (p. 12). As a result, when the citizens realize that their needs are not being met, those with skills and money eventually will decide to migrate and this turns into an never-ending cycle of brain drain that is detrimental to the economic growth of Africa and family units. Further, a few respondents also mentioned that they decided to remain in the host country because of family; some have reunited with their spouses or relatives whereas some have been married in the host country and have formed a new family. This confirms the study by [International Migration Outlook \(2017\)](#) suggesting that family migration has been the main channel of migration to the OECD area in recent years. More than 1.6 million family migrants received a residence permit in the OECD area in 2015, representing almost 40% of the total permanent migration inflow. In addition, in Europe, about 30% of intra-European movements are estimated to be associated with family reasons - around 400,000 people in 2015 alone.

The researchers want to highlight that there are options for international students to extend their stay in the U.S. after completion of their studies and many participants opted for them. Fwd. US, an immigration and criminal justice reform advocacy organization based in the U.S posit that, since the United States does not have a post-graduate work visa and does not offer a specialized pathway to permanent residency for graduates of U.S. schools, Optional Practical Training (OPT) allows graduates to gain hands-on, in-country work experience

with U.S. employers in their fields of study (Fwd. US, 2021), which is mostly made up of Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) graduates. STEM graduates with master's degrees made up roughly a third (34%) of all authorized OPT enrollees. [Batalova and Israel \(2021\)](#) also explain that, after international students have completed their academic or research programs, they may remain in the United States if they are eligible for family and/or employer-sponsored green cards, the K-1 visa for fiancé(e)s of U.S. citizens, and some non-immigrant visas.

Finally, the findings regarding the reason why some graduates do not go back to their home countries are in line with the world systems theory used in this study which stipulate that,

Brain drain is interpreted as an outcome of the structure of world capitalism, which creates conditions that produce economic growth for some countries and underdevelopment for others through the application of different modes of labor control, state machineries, and distribution of political power. This is so because the capitalist world system is based on an international division of labor that determines the relationships among different regions as well as the types of labor conditions within each region ([Rizvi, 2005, p. 183](#)).

### **African Graduates' Experience after Deciding to Remain in the US**

The findings suggest that the African graduates have had positive and negative experiences. Under the positive experiences the participants had after deciding to remain in the U.S., a great number of African graduates indicated that they have had better opportunities compared to their home countries and better salary. For the respondents who were offered a job, their positions permitted them to acquire relevant skills. However, other respondents got employment that was irrelevant to their studies. This means that some migrants in this study are not gaining skills, instead they getting de-skilled. These findings validated the previous literature by [Siar \(2013\)](#) stating that although the education and skills of highly skilled migrants are recognized in the host country, it is not uncommon for them to experience 'deskilling' or to be deployed to positions much lower than their education, training or experience when they start to participate in the domestic labor market. [Bauder \(2003\)](#) adds that from a human rights perspective, deskilling is a form of brain abuse. Deskilling not only results in economic losses for migrants but also in psychological and health problems. Affected migrants suffer when they are not reaping the full rewards of their human capital ([Siar, 2013](#)).

While on the positive experiences, others mentioned that they feel happier than when they were in their countries. The assumption here based on the results is that, probably other participants were not working while in their home countries due to a lack of employment opportunity,

therefore, financially they could not provide for themselves resulting in stress/unhappiness. Another assumption is that some earned low wages while others were discriminated against in their home countries because of their sexual orientation and other form of nepotism. But when they were granted an opportunity to study abroad, life became easier compared to their home countries.

Conversely, other than loneliness, stress, and difficulty in adapting to the host nation's culture, racism seemed to be a far greater negative experience felt by respondents in the host country. US studies fare a lot better in investigating the racism experiences of black Africans. This is in keeping with the previous research by [Boafo-Arthur \(2014a\)](#) where in a review of the research literature on the experiences of Black African Immigrant Students (BAIS) in US higher education, identifies racial prejudice and discrimination as the most serious issue affecting their adjustment, causing them a great deal of stress. The review shows that Africans suffered prejudice and discrimination based on their black skin color, culture and accent, and stereotypes about their countries of origin and their way of life, both from home students and other international students (including black home students) ([Zewolde, 2021, p. 14](#)).

Moreover, [Berry \(2017, as cited in Albert, 2021\)](#) alludes that, establishing new roots and ties in the receiving country is one of the main tasks of immigrants in their process of socio-cultural and psychological adaptation. A failure to establish bonds with the receiving country can lead to social isolation and loneliness ([Hurtado-de-Mendoza et al. 2014](#)). [Hurtado-de-Mendoza et al. \(2014\)](#) assert that loneliness can be compounded by cases of rejection, discrimination, isolation, stereotyping, micro-aggression and so on in their new communities.

### **Graduates Likelihood to Stay in Host Country, Move to Another Country or Go Back Home**

The participants were required to indicate their likelihood as the next course of action in the next five years. The majority of the respondents, 62.9% of Nigerian and 58% Kenyan indicated that it is very unlikely that they will move back to their home country in the next five years. According to the findings, it is clear that 65.6% of Nigerians and 52% of Kenyans indicated that it is very unlikely for them to move to another country, the majority of the respondents, 89.2% very likely desire and intend to remain in the host country. The statements read:

I have close family here and I can't leave them. I can only go back if we all decide to go back home which I don't see it happening anytime soon, but we do go home and visit other family members" (Nigerian Graduate).  
Yes, I intend to go back home after some time. For now, I want to gain all the experience and make money, then I can go back and apply all the knowledge I have gained here and contribute to my country's development and work with the young people who are interested in

technology (Kenyan graduate).

It is worth mentioning that despite some of the challenges experienced by graduates such as loneliness, perceived racism, most of participants still view the US as a land of opportunity. This is dictated by the deteriorating economic, social and political condition in home countries. It is also important to mention that despite graduates remaining in the US, they however continue to remain in contact with their home countries. Most of them travel to their home countries and continue to contribute in different ways such as through remittances and other development activities.

### Conclusion

The underdevelopment that is characterized by unemployment, low wages, and lack of research funding, to name a few, urges African students to use international education as a channel to seek opportunities abroad once they have acquired their higher qualifications. Similarly, the growth policy created in the U.S. to lure human capital to their shores as there is a shortage domestically, creates a demand for highly skilled capital, encouraging migration as well. This means that if there was adequate economic development in these countries, it would mean that their economies would have the capacity to absorb them because jobs and other opportunities would be available. The findings in this study also have shown that the differences between developing and developed countries, such as unemployment, income, living standards, and so on, force those in developing countries to seek better life elsewhere. Furthermore, the theories utilized in this study have confirmed the reasons international students do not return to their home countries.

In more general terms, this study has shown that a non-return of African graduates is a consequence of economic factors that have been coupled with few social and political factors that exist in their respective countries and destination country. Their decision to migrate is induced by an increase in remuneration and improved economic benefits in the destination countries. Their education and the skills they have acquired are their main resource and it is very important for them that these are also appropriately used and harnessed in the host country they chose to remain in.

### Declarations

### Acknowledgments

This study would not have been possible without the willingness of participants to provide valuable information and their time. A word of thank you goes to each one who participated in the interviews despite busy schedule. We declare that this paper is an original report of our research, has been written by us and has not been submitted to any journal. The work is almost entirely our own work; the collaborative contributions

have been indicated clearly and acknowledged.

### Ethical approval/conduct of the research

Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal; ethics committee and consents were obtained from participants.

### Consent for publication

We the authors consent the publication of the paper

### Availability of data and materials

Data and materials are available

### Competing Interests

There is no competing interests.

### Funding

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### Authors Contributions

This paper was jointly worked by the two authors.

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