

Push and Pull Factors in Relation to Skills Shortages in South Africa

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ABSTRACT There are many factors that push people out of the country. While affirmative action is one factor that contributes to emigration of skilled individuals, other factors include: crime, better wage offers, better quality of life and future for their children, economic stability and improved health care. These factors include: attractive salary packages, early retirement within the education sector, an opportunity to gain international work experience, an improved lifestyle and a variety of career choices. Immigrants, on the other hand, are pulled to South Africa as they see this as offering them economic opportunities that are not available in their home countries. These immigrants range from a large number of unskilled to a limited number of highly skilled workers. The main purpose of this study was to determine the factors that push or pull skilled labour into or out of South Africa and the consequences of this movement. The outcome of this study was achieved through undertaking a brief literature review of push-and-pull factors, followed by the empirical research. A survey-based research design was adopted using a closed questionnaire to determine the factors that either push or pull skilled labour from or to South Africa. The sample consisted of 800 organisations/businesses that seek to employ skilled foreign labour in South Africa. The results of this study have confirmed the findings of other research and similar studies undertaken. These push-and-pull factors cannot be addressed overnight; therefore, the recruitment of skilled foreign workers could be a short- to medium-term solution to the problem.