CHAPTER 4 - THE AMERICANA[1]

Does signalling "foreignness" reduce the benefit of transnational education of returnees? Evidence from Nigeria.[2]

[1]Americana is a word in Nigeria referring to people who either (1) pretend to be Americanized or (2) have been Americanized. The first meaning is derogatory while the other is covetous. Sometimes the term denotes both meanings.

[2]This research was pre-registered under EGAP Registration ID: 20211022AA on October 22, 2021, and is available online. All data are available here.

Abstract

One central purpose of overseas education for citizens from low-income countries is that it may guarantee better economic positions and jobs when migrants choose to return to their home country. Despite the premium associated with schooling abroad, seeking new employment may have a cultural backlash. Studies that examine how foreign accents affect the economic integration of skilled returnees are rare. In a large-scale web-based vignette experiment of 488 Nigerian firms, I manipulated foreign and local accents to examine whether their effects varied across five different occupations. The findings revealed that foreign education yielded positive returns in software and finance occupations while signalling a foreign accent had a slightly negative effect on the perceived value of foreign education in these occupations, which can be referred to as transnational occupations. However, no significant returns were observed for foreign education in other occupations, where approximately half or more of the effects of studying abroad on hiring decisions were influenced by signalling a local accent. The paper points to the need to explore the differential outcomes of returnees based on their cultural capital and occupational choices.

Keywords: Returns to Education; Return Migration; Transnational Occupation; International Education.

4 Chapter Four

4.1 Introduction

Skilled migration is highly prized in the Global South. Students in low-income countries are mainly motivated to receive overseas education because of higher wages and human capital accumulation than those received by non-migrants (Reinhold and Thom, 2013; De Vreyer et al., 2010; Campos-Vazquez and Lara, 2012; Wahba, 2015; IIE and Academic Cooperation Association, 2004). While this trend of continuous out-migration of skilled immigrants is often feared to contribute to brain drain, there are instances where skilled returnees bring back their expertise, contributing to what is known as "brain circulation" (Dustmann et al., 2011; Casey and Dustmann, 2010; Chiswick and Miller, 2009; Dustmann, 1996; Gathmann et al, 2019).

However, upon their return, returnees' success in the labour market depends on simultaneously negotiating the recognition of not only their human capital but their cultural capital. Returnees' path to getting their first job can have a cultural backlash because the human capital from a foreign country also incorporates a symbolic identity that may not match the expectations of the local labour market (Nohl et al 2006; Kõu and Bailey 2014. 2014). Returnees in this paper are also referred to as skilled, educated or transnational returnees.

Previous research has not fully explored the influence of cultural expectations on the economic integration of returnees, as migration involves not only the movement of people but also of cultures, and transnationals develop a transnational identity during migration. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, which argues that subjective expectations regulate possibilities, and Rivera's (2012) concept of cultural matching, which suggests that recruitment is a form of cultural matching, returnees and employers are expected to adhere to the same cultural norms (Nohl et al., 2006). This implies that there may be an implicit social closure system that enforces expected norms among workers (Waldinger and Lichter, 2003) and employers are more likely to reward applicants who signal they can conform to these norms. Combining Bourdieu's and Rivera's ideas, it can be seen that local employers' subjective expectations regulate returnees' objective possibilities. The norms reinforced by employers and cultural matching determine what is acceptable. According to Gibson and McKenzie (2009), social assimilation and cultural capital may play a bigger role in integration than economic prospects in the returnees' home countries.

In this paper, I seek to answer if signalling foreign accents has a negative effect on returnees' job market success. Signalling theory argues that employers reward foreign education based on what can be observed during the application process — and make judgements by their expectations from the signals (Simon, 1957; Deterding and Pedula 2016; Bol and van de Werfhorst 2011; Ferrer and Riddell 2008; Hungerford and Solon 1987; Spence 1978; Weiss 2006). I investigate this by conducting a survey experiment with 488 employers in Nigeria which I also refer to as Key Recruiting Officers (KROs) and recruiters.

Returnees may signal their foreign degrees on their resume for three reasons. The

first is because they have to at least admit that they have a degree. The other two reasons are exclusive – that their degree is more important than those of non-migrants, and that in some cases their migration offers a new form of cultural competency. While foreign education may imply higher levels of human capital - a premium that is often favoured by local employers, it may also imply higher levels of a foreign cultural disposition which may be penalised. This paper points to these two positions.

Theories explaining lower returns to education for specific groups often attribute it to outgroup hostilities or discrimination. However, new evidence suggests that this phenomenon may be due to ingroup favoritism (Greenwald and Pettigrew, 2014; Baert De Pauw, 2014; Portmann and Stojanovic, 2022), as different forms of cultural capital are rewarded differently. Employers tend to prefer hiring applicants from their own social networks, particularly in low-skilled jobs where applicants possess lower levels of human capital (Waldinger and Lichter, 2003; Fernandez and Galperin, 2014; Ibarra, 1999; Rivera, 2012; 2020)

In the context of migration, a foreign education may be reviewed beyond the applicant's human capital. Because foreign education connotes an implicitly different level of cultural competencies, it is likely to create an emotive and social backlash that leads to social closure and opportunity hoarding (Tilly, 1998; Duguid 2011). The consequences of these social closures are often reinforcement of the employers' cultural norms and the organization [1]. Culturally fit applicants are an increasing requirement in the workplace and returnees who have different dispositions may be seen as a cultural threat to existing norms (Cubik 2013; Cesare, 1974). I argue that signalling foreign accents has a negative effect on skilled returnees' job market success (Hypothesis 1).

Additionally, there is a growing interest in the role of occupation in migration and more specifically in transnationalism (Connor and Polataikjo, 2002). There exist "transnational occupations" that often reflect the parallel and dualized market needs of both sending and receiving countries (Lusis Harald Bauder; 2010; Nohl et al, 2014; Portes et al 1999, Nowicka, M. 2013; Ren Liu 2019). Transnationals may able to adjust to multiple identities by engaging in these transnational occupations. In this regard, a segmented labour market in the home country may advance the recognition & negotiation of cultural capital — which may have a higher effect on occupations or roles that are deemed transnational (Ong, 1999; Bauder 2012; Portes et al 1999).

Henry and Pinch (2000a) for example, studied a group of returnees in the Motor Sport Industry in the UK and described them as" a group of people" whose cultures of mobility take place within-firm networks and are not bounded by practice that hinders innovation. Occupation is central to migrants' transnationalism (Huot et al, 2013; Nayar & Hocking 2013) and returns to education may be negotiated and produced through a returnee's profession (Huot and Rudman 2010; Nayar et al 2012). I argue that the effect of foreign education on the job market success of skilled returnees is moderated by the character of the occupation or roles (Hypothesis 2).

By implication, two main factors influence returnees' economic integration. The first is the character of the labour market that manifest through differential occupational outcomes and the second is that local employers may rationalize that skilled returnees have

[1] Interviews were conducted with 51 employers and a brief analysis on what norms might be contested are in the Appendix.

observable cultural capital that is subject to manipulation (signalling) by returnees and may reward them differently (Spencer, 1978).

I contribute to two main strands of literature. The first is new theories on migrant integration that highlights the diverse transitions in transnationalism — and that this requires migrants or returnees continuously negotiate their cultural capital (Nohl et al 2014; Kõu and Bailey, 2014). Second, cultural capital from foreign institutions that shares valuable linkages with local needs can improve returnees' integration (Trans-local elitism). Examples in Taiwan, India, and China Chaudhary and Hamdani, 2002; Gmelch, 1987; Kapur and McHale, 2005; Xu, 2010.

Using a large-scale vignette experiment in Nigeria, my key contributions are a thematic discussion on utilizing the reverse brain drain in West Africa, strategies to support the labour market integration of returnees and exploring the importance of local-specific cultural capital on the returns to transnational education.

I begin with a discussion on the theory of cultural capital to better understand the role of foreign accents and how it intertwines with the returnee's human capital. I further discuss which norms associated with foreign education might be contested. Additionally, I provide a description of Nigeria's skilled migration and labour market dynamics. The subsequent sections introduce the research design and the vignette experiment. I ended the paper with the findings, a discussion and a conclusion on what can be learned about the signals of foreign accents by returnees across different occupations in the labour market.

4.2 Theorizing Returnees' Cultural Capital

In this section, I discuss Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital as a tool in theorizing returnees' economic integration into the local economy.

Bourdieu described cultural capital as consisting of three parts - the institutional, objectified and embodied forms that allow individuals to negotiate their way in society. In the past decades, studies have shown the importance of the first two capital on migrants which are the institutionalized and objectified capital proxied through education, skills, experience and other symbolic capital (Hania Janta et al, 2021; Du, Z et al 2021; Piracha and Vadean 2010; Marchetta, F;2012). This capital can be transmitted into economic gains. In other words, institutional capital such as educational qualifications or acquired skills can be transmitted within the society that values such and exchanged for economic goods such as jobs or money. By cultural capital, I refer to the cultural representation such as accents, affiliations, and social networks that stimulate solidarity and boundaries.

An important component missing in studies on the economic performance of migrants and their return experience is capturing the embodied state which involves a higher degree of concealment and transmission than other forms of capital. Bourdieu argues that the embodied state takes time to accumulate and with potential capacity to produce profits and to reproduce itself in identical or expanded form. He also suggested that the main way to legitimize buying the embodied capital is by "buying the person" because they are closely linked to them. While foreign qualifications and human capital

are important components of education migration, the embodied state forms the core. What this suggests is that for returnees to fully integrate into the economy of their home country, or when they return, their disposition may be assessed. I indexed the embodied state with an accent.

Cultural capitals are relational, as their value is dependent on their recognition and the context in which it is being used - and skilled migrants who cannot develop strategies to "market" locally-recognized cultural capital in the local labour market can be punished. For example, a returnee could be disapproved for acting "foreign", if she speaks in an accent that was perceived to be earned in the course of studying overseas, especially in OECD countries. The process by which cultural capital is recognized can be referred to as cultural matching which determines the value and recognition of cultural capital (Burawoy, 1978; Rivera, 2012, Árendás et al; 2022).

Internationalism and foreign education are of historical importance to Nigerians and this compels returnees to switch between foreign and local lifestyles including accents. However, transnationalism in Africa is less perceived as a mixture of two cultures, but rather as a core identity upon which certain values have been super-imposed (Turner and Nauja, 2013). Speaking a foreign accent in Nigeria can be perceived as a signal of foreignness and it is believed to have been subjected to manipulation by returnees. Because employers believe returnees can code-switch (switch between local and foreign accents), signalling local accents may be seen as an intentional rehash or preference for foreign culture and solidarity - a trend that is common among Blacks more than among other racial groups in the USA (McCluney et al 2019). A foreign accent is known to communicate symbolic boundaries and can serve as a signal of solidarity and foreignness (Kogan et al, Gluszek and Dovidio 2010b, Fuertes et al. 2012).

While it may be true that returnees' skills and capital from their previous destinations are contested because they are not culturally relevant or recognized as proposed by Bourdieu and others (Eseer, 1996; Nohl et 2006), there are a substantial number of returnees that have "transnational" capital and are able to live near parallel lives and exhibit dual cultures (Portes, 1999). They are embedded in their home and host countries simultaneously. Evidence of transnationalism has been found among Chinese returnees and Polish migrants in Germany (Nowicka, M. 2013; Ren Liu 2019). segmented market advance the differential recognition & negotiation of human & cultural capital (Ong, 1999; Bauder 2012). There are others who describe the possibility of transnational roles that have embedded the local market needs of home and destination countries,

4.3 The Case - Nigeria

In this section, I discuss the historical importance of Nigeria's returnees to the local political economy and the constraining effect of Nigeria's labour market on returnees' economic integration.

Historically in West Africa, educated migrants were socially positioned as a leading class. They are often believed to have a cultural disposition that is different from the locals (Patrick, 2013). A home-comer is said to meet life at home to be longer accessible in immediacy because his personality has been broken down into pieces (Schütz,

A, 1945). The bulk of educated elites in Nigeria in the early 1900s after the slave trade constituted immigrants from the Creole culture in Sierra Leone, where most freed slaves from West Africa were diverted, and retrained (Smitherman, 1986; Dixon-Fyle, 2006). This created opportunities for "a group of Nigerians" to have a confluence of culture and ideas that include those earned locally and those from a new culture. These migrants a grouped into a social class and an identity that is referred to be different from locals (Patrick, 2003).

In the wake of the British preparation of Nigeria for self-government in the mid-90s, political ideas and civilization were thumped to be a haven of Western ideas and adherents. Education migrants, some of which are only educated via pro-slavery institutions were deemed fit to decide Nigeria's political and social future. The early political organization, parties, and movements for pro-independence were a direct influence on foreign students. For many of these young Africans with foreign affiliations, there was a conscientious need to return home and support "locals" from the technological backwardness and failing progress that characterized the new era of European industrialization (Esedebe, 2003).

The relative advantage of returnees accentuated by pro-independence campaigns and the oil boom in the late 1960s incentivize other Nigerians to either move to Europe or send their children abroad, which has remained till today. Promising Nigerian students were accepted into foreign institutions and granted temporary visas with an inclination that they return and take up positions in burgeoning sectors. Between 1987 to 1989, locally educated professionals left Nigeria for the UK, USA and Canada in tens of thousands (Adepoju, 2006). According to data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), the number of Nigerian students at overseas institutions of education grew 71 percent between 2007 and 2010. Today, Nigeria has the fastest-growing student population migrating to the US and consists of 40% of Africans travelling to the UK yearly HESA, 2019, IEE, 2006. Nigerians are the most educated African immigrant group in the US after Egypt.

On the contrary, the average premium of a foreign education may have reduced because Nigerians are attending less competitive schools. For example, Table 4.1 shows that Nigeria though has a high student population in the UK, and the proportion of the student population studying in the most-ranked UK universities (top 10) in 2018/19 is relatively lower (15%), compared to other African countries like South Africa, Ghana and Kenya. African countries such as Egypt, Mauritius, and South Africa have above 35 percent of their students in the UK studying in top-ranked universities. A further examination shows that a higher proportion of Nigerian students attend the low-rated universities in the World by the Times Higher Education ranking and are few of them are not rated because they don't meet the criteria. While some of these universities' rankings are known to be problematic, it is less likely that a school that provides comparatively premium education would be lowly ranked, disqualified, or in some cases not ranked at all.

Table 4.1: Proportion of Country -Student Population studying in the most ranked Universities (top 10) in the UK (2018/19)

Country	Proportion
Nepal	0.033
India	0.066
Bangladesh	0.081
Vietnam	0.089
Ireland	0.09
Pakistan	0.101
Kuwait	0.113
Sri Lanka	0.136
Nigeria	0.151
Zimbabwe	0.156
Cyprus (European Union)	0.161
Oman	0.173
Trinidad and Tobago	0.174
Greece	0.176
United Arab Emirates	0.18
Saudi Arabia	0.198

Table 4.1 continued from previous page

Country	Proportion
Russia	0.199
United States	0.204
Germany	0.204
Switzerland	0.219
Malaysia	0.226
Ghana	0.227
Uganda	0.237
Hong Kong (Special Admin Region of China)	0.24
China	0.253
Kenya	0.279
Egypt	0.323
Singapore	0.33
Mauritius	0.354
South Africa	0.387

Source: HESA, 2021; Times Higher Education, 2021

List only include 30 countries with the highest tertiary student population in the UK

Additionally, foreign immigration policies and Nigeria's diplomatic relations have also influenced the flow of migration, the selection of migrants, and the impetus for return. For many decades, the United States was Nigeria's favourite OECD migration country. Despite more intra-regional migration between Nigeria and other African countries, the USA, Gulf countries, and OECD countries suffice historical and intellectual importance for education migrants. The United State Visa Lottery (green card) program grants 50,000 permanent visas to citizens in the Global South showing an inclination for change within this period. Though the program targets low-skill workers, many Nigerians who accessed the visa information and applied electronically were deemed educated.

The character of the Nigerian labour market may also restrain the employment of skilled returnees. Its labour market is highly informal and employs roughly 75% of Nigeria's labour force (IMF, 2017). The country experiences high unemployment — but firms requiring lower-level skills may be unfazed because they self-create their jobs (Bloom et al, 2006; Craig, 1990). Returnees seeking jobs may be constrained by the effect of high unemployment and the high levels of informalities in the labour market.

Generally, the gaps between the skilled and unskilled may converge in countries whose economy is mainly driven by the informal sector. Firms are not incentivized to create and reward premium skills. The returns to skilled employment are lower and premium skills are infiltrated. The expected value for transnational skills by Nigerian skilled returnees may be regarded as overpriced - this may propel an affective negative attitude toward them from local employers.

Returnees' skills may also be affected by increased competition from non-migrants. There has been an increase in Nigeria's education budget, university enrollment and graduate turnout(Olayiwola et al; 2016). This is likely to also reduce the schooling gap between skilled returnees and non-migrants(Docquier, Lohest, and Marfouk, 2006a).

4.4 Research Design

4.4.1 Survey design: sampling assignment

Considering that employers' choices are multidimensional, and they are often sensitive towards revealing recruitment decisions, I adopt a conjoint design. Vignette design has been classically used to provide causal explanations on fairness in the labour market (Alves and Rossi 1978; Bates, 1990; Correll et al 2007), and more recently used to study implicit behaviour on issues of symbolic belonging (Schachter, 2016.); gendered wage-gap (Auspurg, K., Hinz, T., and Sauer, C. 2017), education inequalities (Di Stasio et al 2016) and labour market inequalities (Turper, S 2017; Lahey, et al 2017; Kübler, 2018). I benefit from embedding the survey question in a concrete scenario so that they require little abstraction from the survey respondents. Although the recruitment process in Nigeria is mostly completed by CV submission, a survey experiment guarantees the anonymity of employers so that they can express potentially sensitive attitudes without being identified as holding the sensitive attitude. Conjoint analysis is also unique for handling situations in which a decision-maker has to deal with options that simultaneously vary across two or more attributes.

Key Recruiting Officers (KROs) which include human resource personnel and hiring managers that are directly involved in recruiting for the selected roles assessed 6 vignettes of recent graduate applicants. These applicants are competing for the same position (Associate or Manager) but differed with respect to the characteristics reported on their resumes. The different combinations of the factorial design yielded a vignette universe of 483,840 that is impossible to assign to all recruiters. For an orthogonal design across the twelve attributes that were assessed, I balanced the design effectively to 2,000 vignettes [1] with a d-efficiency of 95%. This effectively reduced the correlations between repeated observations and eliminated implausible vignettes. The six vignettes (6 from 2,000) were randomly assigned to each KRO for every survey deployed. Each Key Recruiting Officer (KROs) evaluated the candidates based on their characteristics and individual pitch (which included candidates' accents). Recruiters scored candidates from a range between 1 to 100.

The dimensions included in the vignette are school attended, study duration, accents (discussed in the preceding section), previous work experience, grade, extracurricular activities, professional affiliation, gender, ethnic first names, and surname. Each dimension was weighted the same except for the school attended which was half-weighted. This means every two locally trained applicants were matched to one education returnee. The chances of an employer evaluating an applicant trained locally are twice the chances of evaluating a foreign-trained applicant which is a crude way of assigning the expected proportion of returnees applicants to locally trained ones that reflect what may be expected in the population. Transnational schools were restricted to the UK and US universities. Each employer evaluated only SIX (6) potential candidates for specific work roles to reduce attention bias.

To control the effect of prestige, I neutralize any specific association with specific institutions in the UK and in the USA. Because it is very unlikely that Nigerian recruiters are aware of the names of all foreign institutions in the United States and the United Kingdom, the school names of the educational institutions included in the experiment were neutralized. By neutralization I mean the name of the school did not exist, they also did not "sound" like a prestigious university and were cited to exist in cities where prestigious institutions are not located.

Because networks could not be easily measured given the method, I used a crude method as an index for networks which is the candidate's affiliation with professional networks. For all professions, each candidate was randomly assigned to membership or non-membership to professional associations that are locally recognized

4.4.2 Randomizing Accents

An important aspect of this study, as mentioned earlier, is to investigate the distinct impacts of signalling local or foreign internationalization when young returnees are searching for their first job upon return. In this context, foreign accents are employed as an indicator of foreign cultural internationalization. To explore this, each candidate's vi-

[1] The sample consisted of 488 employers with 6 candidates each - a total of 2,928 candidates. A few candidates, whose audio had not been listened to by the KROs (employers), were removed from the final sample. Including these candidates did not change the results.

gnette presented to employers was randomly assigned either a local or foreign accent.

Four volunteers were recruited as accent testers. They included a male returnee with a natural British accent and another female with an American accent. Both have spent a reasonable amount of time in the UK and the USA, respectively. The last two volunteers were both Nigerians, one male and the other female. The pitch duration for each candidate averaged around 30 seconds. The accent was incorporated into the web survey using an XML format, where conditions were set to display the audio that matched each candidate's gender and place of education. Candidates with foreign accents were randomized so that KROs would randomly receive a candidate who was either locally or foreign-trained. [1]

The pitch contained general appeals to candidates' interest in the company and requests for the resume to be reviewed. For each candidate, the pitch contents were quite similar and the main differences were the accents. To make it more plausible, the speech contents consist of different synonyms of the same words across the six candidates shown to each employer. The speech does not also contains competency-related content in order to reduce bias and ensured the speech portrayed the personality of each candidate. [2] The sequencing allowed each candidate's pitch to be randomized such that the chances that each recruiter will listen to the same voice across the 6 candidates are due to chance and reduced the issues of the direct impact of individual testers on the results. The balance table 4.2 shows that the sample is well-balanced across candidates' main attributes.

4.5 Analytical Strategy

The experiment allows the ignorability assumption of causality to hold as comparing the average of vignettes that are randomly assigned allows the ignoring of potential missing or unobserved exogenous variables.

The results were tested across four models. Model 1, presented below, represents a linear model where Y_i denotes the score assigned to an applicant on a 0-100 interval scale, indicating an employer's intention to hire. Recruiters scored candidates on a scale ranging from 1 to 100.

Additionally, each participant was asked to select their preferred candidates, yielding a binary outcome. Although the results were used for robustness analysis, the linear outcome was predominantly adopted. Numerical measure improves the granularity of measuring candidates' suitability and allows the recruiter to provide divergent opinions on candidates with similar binary outcomes. The linear outcome was further logit-transformed and served as the dependent variable, referred to as "intention to hire." The labels and rationale for each attribute are displayed in Appendix .7.

[1] A sample of the code for accent randomization is: $Gender$ = 'male' and $Schooling\_profile$ = 'Belington College after a three-year degree program in Worcester, UK' and $display\_codestatus$ = 'false', and the $codestatus$ takes from the random number from the code $once(int(2000 * random()) + 1)$ that aligns with the index of a list of 2000 candidate profile. The full XML file is available in the online appendix.

[2] The Appendix contains the text of each candidate's speech.

Table 4.2: Balance Check by School Attended

Characteristic	**N**	**abroad**, N = 831[1]	**local**, N =1,690[1]	**p**[2]
Accent	2,521			<0.001
foreign accent		411 (49%)	0 (0%)	
local accent		420 (51%)	1,690 (100%)	
Age	2,521			0.3
20-25		274 (33%)	550 (33%)	
26-30		295 (35%)	561 (33%)	
31-40		262 (32%)	579 (34%)	
Gender	2,521			0.6
female		422 (51%)	875 (52%)	
male		409 (49%)	815 (48%)	
Experience	2,521			0.3
No Exp		409 (49%)	866 (51%)	
2 year Exp		422 (51%)	824 (49%)	
Network	2,521			0.8
member of		424 (51%)	870 (51%)	
not member		407 (49%)	820 (49%)	
Degree	2,521			0.005
Bachelor's		388 (47%)	890 (53%)	
Masters'		443 (53%)	800 (47%)	

$$Y_i = \alpha + \gamma_1 \text{ForeignEdu}_i + \gamma_2 \text{LocalAccent}_i + \gamma_3 \text{LocalProfNet}_i + \phi_i \text{HumanCap}_i + \beta_i \text{EmployerX}_i + \iota_i \text{Region}_i + \kappa_i Z_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (1)$$

γ_1, γ_2, and γ_3 are the anticipated treatment effects of foreign education, local accents, and affiliation with locally recognized professional networks—which are binary variables that are marked as 0 for applicants locally trained, foreign accent, and no affiliation to professional networks, respectively. ϕ is a vector of the applicant's human capital that includes the year of work experience, performance in school, and level of education. κ is a vector of employer-related characteristics such as age, ethnicity, and years of experience in the role evaluated. β represents employer-related characteristics which include employer fixed effect and firm level of operations (multinational or local). ι is the region fixed effect.

γ_1, γ_2 and γ_3 are the anticipated treatment effects of foreign education, local accents and affiliation with locally recognized professional networks — which are binary variables that are marked as 0 for applicants locally trained, foreign accent and no affiliation to professional networks respectively. ϕ is a vector applicant's human capital that includes the year of work experience, performance in school and level of education. κ is a vector of employer-related characteristics such as age, ethnicity, and years of experience in the role evaluated. β represents employer-related characteristics which include employer fixed effect and firm level of operations (multinational or local). ι is the region fixed effect.

Model 2 is a linear model without the employer-fixed effect. Model 3 is the random-intercept effect from multivariate linear regression accounting for differences in employer characteristics. For example, recruiters who are trained in foreign countries might tend to reduce any potential bias for transnationals. Model 4 is a logistic model in which the dependent variable is the binary question of whether an employer will hire or not, which is independent of the initial score attributed to applicants.

The control variables include uncorrelated control items (extracurricular activities) that are unlikely to apply to one recruiter. Uncorrelated items reduce the likelihood that respondents will satisfice (make hiring decisions mainly to satisfy survey requirements) because they are unlikely to interpret the survey as a scale measuring one concept. (Kuklinski et al. 1997).

4.5.1 The Experiment

The experiment started with a pilot in August 2021 covering 49 employers in Abuja. Our main fieldwork commenced Oct 2021 and ended in March 2022. Firms chosen were expected to have more than five staff to avoid aggregation of small businesses that transnationals may not likely work. The scope of work covered four main metropolitan and ethnic subregions in Nigeria - the South-South/East (Port Harcourt), South-West (Lagos), Northern (Kaduna), and the country capital (FCT) which is a representation of all regions in Nigeria. I worked with four research officers who coordinated work in each region/state and a central field manager.

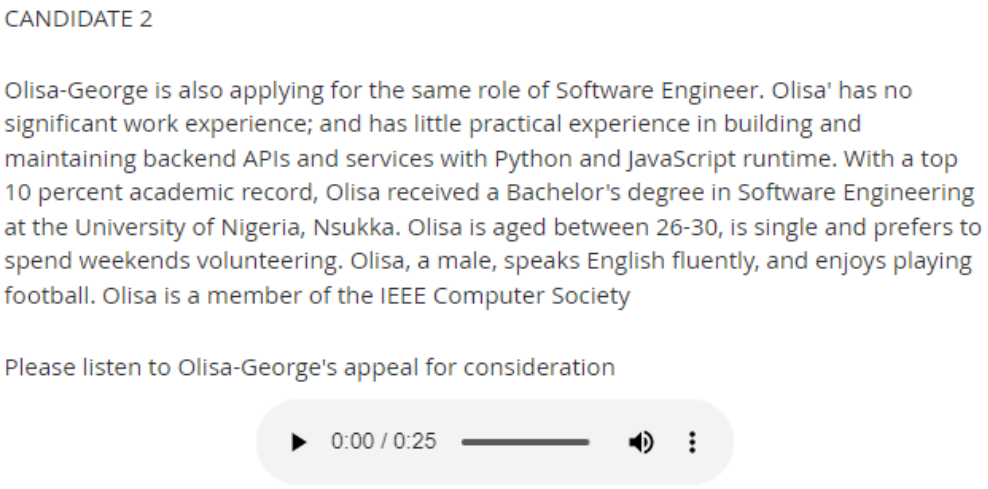
The main challenge in designing an online experiment within the control of the researcher is to ensure the quality of the responses. The Key Respondent Officers (KROs) were selected through personal connections of the research team and direct field visits to firms across the cities that have been identified to have more than five staff. A few members of the research team are human resource professionals in Nigeria.

State officers (research team per state) explained the research objectives and the requirements for completing the survey, including requesting the employer's emails. The coordinating manager then sent an email containing a one-time web link directly to the employers. After the initial stage and upon meeting the KROs in-person or through online communication, the research team was requested to inquire about their email addresses and send them an online letter of interest form. Interested individuals would then append their names and company size.

The web survey link was sent to recruit Key Recruiting Officers (KROs) in five job positions. The positions are Communications, Software, Administration, Research (Teaching Non-teaching), and Finance. The specific information and copy of the survey experiment administered to the KROs are available in the online appendix [1]. An example of a vignette for a computer engineering position is shown in Figure 4.1.

[1] Please find the survey instrument: here

Figure 4.1: Snapshot of Vignette



To achieve a representative sample of job positions in Nigeria, I extracted vacancies from an online job site [1]. I scraped over 2,247 vacancies[2] across three months duration and extracted the top open positions. The result of the extracted data is shown in Figure **??** using web scraping techniques [3]. I expect that positions with higher vacancies will include the skills acquired by both returnees and non-migrants. I initially sourced data on the degree programs of educated migrants in the US and the UK but jobs locally available are more likely to inform return decisions than skills learned abroad. There is evidence that over-education and skill mismatch is more common among returnees than among non-migrants (Visintin et al; 2015).

As regards the randomization of accents, previous studies from social psychology that manipulate accents use the matched-guise technique (Lambert, 1967). They recruit the same tester for different accents. This makes it possible to control the effect of para-linguistic features such as the speaker's tone and pitch that may affect hiring outcomes. Despite its advantage of controlling for speech confounders, this approach is also known to have a low level of external validity. While I did not adopt the matched-guise technique, I overcame any potential bias in three ways. (1) I ensured that the pitches for the accents were only based on general appeals of acceptance and precluded competence-related content. A detailed composition of the accent content is available in the Appendix. (2) I ensured that both the competence contents were contained in the vignette and the accent pitches had dissimilar levels of randomization. The probability that an employer will evaluate a candidate's competency based on a specific type of accent is reduced to random chance. (3) I also ensured that the duration of the accent was very short and not more than 30 seconds focusing mainly on the signal of foreignness.

[1] www.jobberman.com is the most popular job site in Nigeria.
[2] The graph of all jobs scraped are available in the Appendix
[3] Web scraping is the process of extracting or mining data from the World Wide Web

4.6 Results

4.6.1 Basic Descriptives

First, I present the characteristics of the firms and the employers which I refer to as the Key Recruiting Officers (KRO). About two-thirds (60%) of the firms have more than 10 employees, 31.5% of the KROs are female and 9.1% of the firms were in the public sector. The median age of the KROs is 33 years old and the average number of years they have in evaluating applicants for all positions is 6.9 years.[1] Additionally, 99.1 % of the KROs have completed at least a Bachelor's degree and 33.7% have at least a Master's degree.

It would also be important to know the proportion of local employers that schooled abroad in the sample. The results show that only 5.1% of the employers received a Bachelor's degree outside Nigeria — of whom 28.6% attended the UK, 4.6% attended the USA and 36.4% attended schools in other countries. For Master's degree, 4.9% of employers schooled abroad — of whom 60.4% attended UK, 4.8% USA and 24% in other countries. I asked employers to rate how the survey experiment mirrors their organization's selection criteria which resulted in a mean score of 71.5%.

4.6.2 Main effects (H2): Does Foreign Education Offer a Premium by Occupation?

I start with the discussion of whether there is a premium associated with foreign education using the pooled sample, with the main hypothesis of the role of accents discussed in the next section.

Table 4.3 shows that the intention to hire foreign-trained applicants increases by 4.8% compared to applicants that are locally trained in the pooled sample. In other words, on average, across all the roles considered, foreign education has higher returns than a local one. The result is consistent across all models but the margin dropped drastically and was not statistically significant in the logistic model where employers had to choose whether they would hire an applicant or not.

[1] Full Descriptive Tables are Available in the Online Appendix

Table 4.3: Main Effects of Foreign Education and Accent on Intention to Hire Returnees: Pooled

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
School Attended (Ref: Foreign)				
Locally trained	-0.048**	-0.049**	-0.046**	-0.017
	(0.019)	(0.021)	(0.019)	(0.021)
Accent (Ref: Foreign)				
Local Accent	-0.003	-0.005	-0.006	0.001
	(0.024)	(0.027)	(0.024)	(0.027)
Work Experience (ref: little or no)				
two years	0.167***	0.165***	0.165***	0.180***
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.015)
Local prof. network (Ref: Member)				
Not a member	-0.035**	-0.034**	-0.034**	-0.022
	(0.014)	(0.016)	(0.013)	(0.015)
Degree (ref: Bachelor's)				
Masters'	0.037**	0.032**	0.026*	0.014
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.017)
Observations	2,521	2,521	2,521	2,521
R2	0.470	0.094	0.355	
Employer Fixed Effect	✓	No	✓	✓
Mixed Effect	No	No	✓	No
Binary Dependent Variable	No	No	No	✓

Model 1 is the linear model with the employer-fixed effect and Model 2 has no employer-fixed effect. Model 3 is the random intercept model. Model 4 is a logistic model which is the binary question of whether an employer will hire or not, which is independent of the initial score attributed to applicants. Ethnic names, age, vignette order, quadratic vignette order, firm level of operations (multinational or local), Key Recruiting Officer (KRO)'s ethnicity, gender, age of the applicant, and KRO's years of experience are controlled for in all models. Results of the main variable `School Attended` and `Accent` did not change significantly without the other controls. Standard errors are in parentheses. *Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.00

Table 4.4: Heterogeneous Effects of Foreign Education and Accent on Intention to Hire Returnees by Roles

	(Soft)	(Comm)	(Admin)	(Research)	(Finance)
School Attended (Ref: Foreign)					
Locally trained	−0.155***	−0.012	0.023	−0.031	−0.122***
	(0.057)	(0.056)	(0.036)	(0.044)	(0.043)
Accent (Ref: Foreign)					
Local Accent	0.040	−0.022	−0.004	−0.059	0.030
	(0.074)	(0.067)	(0.047)	(0.054)	(0.057)
Local prof. network (Ref: Member) of	−0.084**	0.031	−0.045	−0.003	−0.057*
	(0.042)	(0.038)	(0.027)	(0.031)	(0.032)
Work Experience (ref: little or no)					
Two yrs experience	0.282***	0.069*	0.157***	0.155***	0.219***
	(0.043)	(0.039)	(0.027)	(0.031)	(0.033)
Degree (ref: Bachelor's)					
Masters'	0.078*	0.029	0.056**	0.054	0.055
	(0.044)	(0.038)	(0.023)	(0.031)	(0.032)
Observations	396	504	796	393	432
R^2	0.283	0.200	0.102	0.246	0.263
Employer Fixed Effect	No	No	No	No	No

"Soft" is software engineer roles, "Comm" is communication roles, "Admin" is administration roles, "Research" is Research roles and "Finance" is Finance Analyst. Ethnic names, age, vignette order, firm level of operations (multinational or local), quadratic vignette order, Key Recruiting Officer (KRO)'s ethnicity, gender and age, and KRO's years of experience are controlled for in all models. Results of the main variable `School Attended` and `Accent` did not change significantly without the other controls. *Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.00

When I further seek to understand how the effect is moderated by occupation, Table 4.4 shows that foreign-trained software and financial analysts are strongly preferred to locally-trained applicants but not in other occupations. Foreign-trained software and financial analysts are 17.2% and 7% preferred to non-migrant applicants respectively. On the other hand, foreign education does not increase an applicant's chance of selection in admin, research and communications roles. These results point to hypothesis two that occupation is central to migrants' transnationalism (Huot et al, 2013; Nayar & Hocking 2013) and that returns to education may be produced or reproduced through the returnee's occupation (Huot & Laliberte Rudman 2010; Nayar et al 2012).

To further examine what other factors may drive hiring decisions and how they interplay with the location where education was received, an interesting and consistent selection criterion across all occupations is the preference for candidates with two years of work experience as against little or no work experience. Employers' intention to hire candidates with two years of work experience is 17 % higher than candidates with no work experience — for applicants seeking their first job. The effect of work experience on hiring software engineers and finance is 26.4% and 20.6% respectively which is relatively higher than applicants in the other three positions. These margins of the effect of work experience are quite strong and suggest that on average, candidates' work experience or "ability to do the job" are quite important factors than the location of educational training — either foreign or local.

Further research can identify whether the higher returns we observe for software and finance positions are suggestive of hiring evaluation of the premium accrued for gaining related work experiences abroad than in local firms. There is also a need to further examine whether roles that yield no returns to foreign education are due to the perceived lower relevance or skill premium in the work experiences gained either locally or abroad. In the survey, we did not test for the effect of the country where the work experience was gained but we observed that roles that returnees, where preferred, had corresponding higher work experience margins. What we do not know is whether we will observe a similar or consistent result if we control for the effect of the location where work experiences were acquired — either foreign or local.

The result confirms hypothesis 2 that the roles that returnees seek when choosing to integrate into the labour market have significant implications. I will discuss in detail the implications of this in the subsequent sections. The concept of labour market segmentation which in this context is the removal of cross-border boundaries by occupation is likely to favour returnees in software and finance roles. For example, research shows that

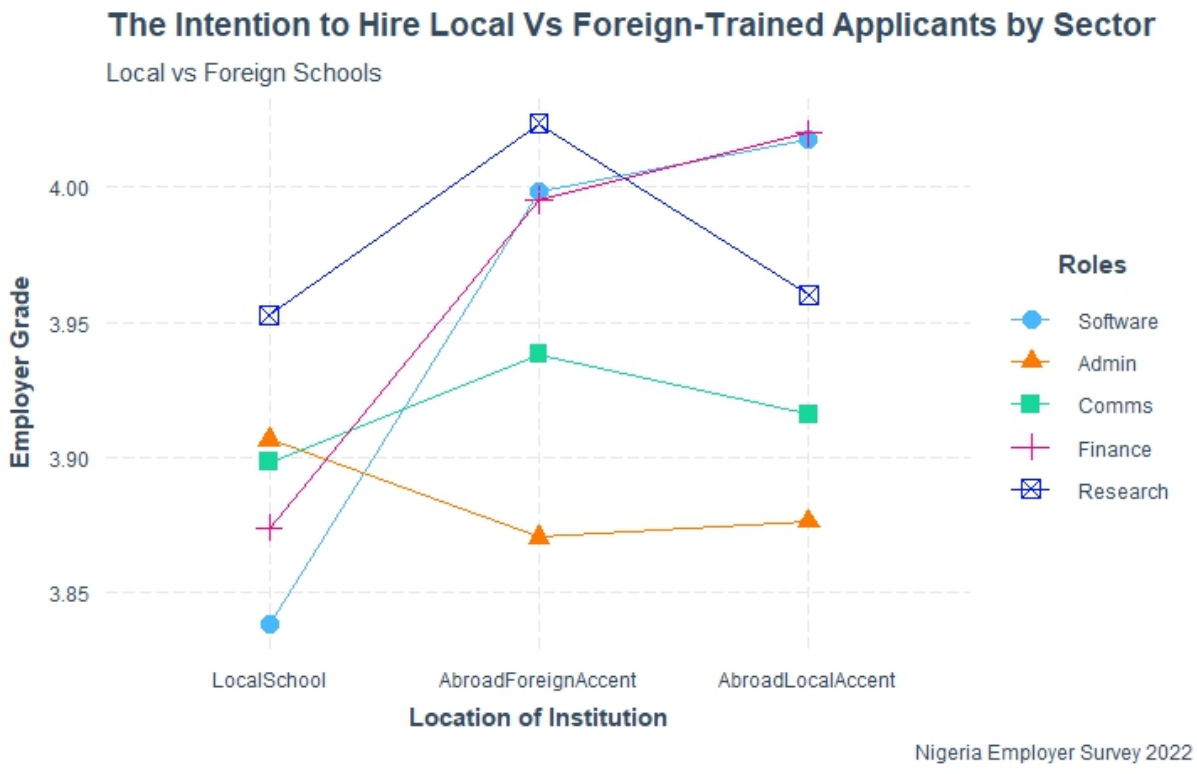
Egypt and Albanian returnees are more likely to be successful than non-migrants when they are entrepreneurs (Piracha and Vadean 2010; Marchetta, F, 2012). It is very unlikely that foreign skills are valued for all roles in the labour market in the same manner.

I also examined the heterogeneous effect of the two types of local institutions covered (private universities and public universities). I did not include this in the analysis because it complicates the findings and does not change significantly what we should expect about the differences between those trained locally and abroad.

4.6.3 Main effects (H1): Does Foreign Cultural Acculturalization Reduce the Returnee's Job Success?

I provide analysis for individual occupations and also re-coded the "accent" variable such that the effect of each category of accent can be parsimoniously observed. By this I mean 3 bins were created that included (1) Candidates who schooled abroad with local accents, (2) candidates who school abroad with foreign accents and (3) those who school locally with local accents. This result is presented in Figure 4.2

Figure 4.2: Effects by Accents and Institutions Combined



I found that signalling a local accent does not overturn the intention of employers to hire foreign-trained applicants in any role (deducting the effect of local accents from the effect of foreign education), but it does slightly increase the chances of hiring foreign-trained applicants in software and admin positions (result not statistically significant).

As shown in Figure 4.2, foreign-trained applicants seeking these two positions (software and finance) have marginally higher returns for signaling local accents. The intention to hire foreign-trained software engineers who signal local accents increases by 6.4% and admin officers by 2.5%.[1]

From figure 4.2, we can observe four main patterns. The first is that there are higher returns to foreign education in software and finance positions than in others — and the rewards are even slightly higher when candidates signal foreign accents. Second, is that returns for foreign accents in both software and finance roles are similar and consistent. Third, figure 4.2 shows that there are roles where locally-trained applicants are preferred. Locally-trained applicants are preferred in administrative roles over those who schooled abroad and there is no difference for foreign-trained admin applicants that signal either a foreign or local accent. The last pattern observed is that speaking a foreign accent is the only difference between schooling abroad and schooling locally in communication and research positions. I further examined why this may be the case for communication and research positions in a quasi-mediation analysis which I will present in the subsequent chapter.

The research shows that different job roles have different penalties for foreign accents. The penalties are likely to be due to the salience of transnationalism. This result shows the nature of the roles is highly predictive of whether the effect of the accent of foreign-trained students will be observed.

As an additional test of the importance of the internationalization of foreign culture, I used a crude measure to determine whether employers may intend to hire candidates with stronger connections with local professional networks. I adapted the professional network to a local-specific professional network for the five job roles. I found that professional networks are locally valued for all positions except in communication roles.

4.6.4 Revisiting Hypothesis 1: Foreign Accents as Mediators

While the research was initially designed to test foreign accents as a moderator, it became evident that neither foreign nor local accents would significantly alter employers' hiring decisions. This suggests that the initial hypothesis that foreign accents might reduce hiring decisions is less likely.[2] Nevertheless, in this case, foreign accents may be better understood as mediators that influence employers' choices, which means they can influence the strength of the relationship between foreign education and hiring decisions better and can shed light on earlier results that tested hypothesis one.

To explore this further, I conducted tests in one of the regions[3] by incorporating

[1] In the employer fixed effect model, in Table .8 which I do not fully adopt for the analysis of individual occupation discussed in this section, I found that the benefit of local accents remained for software roles and local accents also increased chances in the administrative roles by 2.5%. However, these effects dissipated for the financial analyst role in this model. The Employer Fixed Effect though provides additional variation with R^2 of each occupation ranging from 38.2% to 48.2%, it did not significantly change the result of other variables.

[2] Though there are slight positive statistically insignificant results observed in software and finance occupations.

[3] The mediation analysis was specifically conducted in Lagos, which serves as the economic hub of Nigeria. It was not performed in other states where the research was carried out. The decision to

four mediators: 1) innovation, 2) competency, 3) sociability, and 4) accents (previously discussed as a moderator). However, for the purpose of this section, I will focus solely on accents.

The first analysis here will examine whether speaking local accents mediated the effect of foreign education on hiring intentions. Randomizing the accents of candidates assessed by employers makes it more likely that the standard strong ignorability assumption required for mediators is satisfied. Nonetheless, this analysis has its shortcoming. Because the design did not capture the effect of foreign education on returnees' accents and only presumed that a certain proportion of returnees would have specific accents (local or foreign), the mediation analysis is conditioned on the assumption that foreign education increases the chances of signalling foreign accents by about 50%. In other words, by assigning half of the returnees to receive local accents and the other half to foreign accents, the result of this analysis does not fully reflect what may be obtainable in reality. Another test is required to know the proportion of returnees that is more likely to signal foreign acculturation during the hiring process to be more precise. From the analysis, I found that the number of foreign-trained applicants that signalled local accents are 50% for software roles, 53% in finance, 53% in administration, 44% in communication and 47 % in research roles, which is close to 50 %, on average, for each occupation.

The mediation analysis in Table 4.5, shows that about half or more than half of the effects of schooling abroad are mediated by signalling local accents in both communication (63.3%) and research (49.3%) positions — which are positions where there is no clear preference for foreign-trained applicants. When controls were added, signalling a local accent mediated almost all of the effects of foreign education in communication roles (90.4%) and about two-thirds in research roles (66.1%). It also mediates about 36.5 % of administration roles when no controls are added. In other words, having a local accent was critically important for determining the strength of the relationship between foreign education and hiring decisions in these three occupations.

include the mediation analysis was made after the completion of data collection in states other than Lagos.

Table 4.5: Mediating Effect of Signalling Local Accents on Foreign Education

Role	Total Effect of Schooling Abroad	P. Value of ACME	Prop. Mediated by Local Accents	Prop. Mediated by Local Accents (No Controls)
Research	0.03	0.24	63.3%	66.1%
Comms	0.01	0.77	49.3%	90.4%
Admin	-0.02	0.94	-9.1%	36.5%
Software	0.15	0.60	-11%	-1.1%
Finance	0.12	0.84	-4.6%	-7%

[**Note:** The table includes both the proportion mediated by local accents on foreign education with all controls and without controls]

This finding suggests that although a local accent does not have a direct impact on the selection score in research and communication occupations, it does play a role in influencing the strength of the relationship between foreign education and the intention to hire returnees in these two occupations. Employers' perceptions and attitudes towards returnees with foreign education in research and communication occupations are influenced by their local accents, which serves as a signal to employers that foreign-trained applicants are likely to adapt to local norms. While the actual selection processes in these two occupations are primarily influenced by factors such as work experience and level of education (see Table 4.4), the results of the mediation analysis indicate that for foreign-trained applicants, the presence of a local accent determines the degree or intensity of that relationship.

On the other hand, in software and finance occupations where we have established earlier that foreign applicants are highly preferred, local accents did not mediate the association between foreign education and hiring decisions. Like most other positions, the hiring decision for these two roles is likely to be mainly based on expertise. [1]. However, local accents have a marginal positive effect on the hiring chances of applicants in these two roles as we have observed from Table 4.4. This connotes local accents do not determine the strength of the effect of foreign education on selection, though foreign-trained software engineers and finance analysts

In summary, a significant portion of the effect of schooling abroad is mediated by signals of local accents in roles foreign-trained are less preferred except in administrative roles. This suggests that local accents influence the relationship between foreign education and the intention to hire skilled returnees in communication and research roles.[2].

[1] As as we have also observed in Table 4.4, two work experience (compared to no experience) increases the chances of being hired by 28.2 % for software and 21.9 % for finance, which is less compared to 6.9 % in communication, 15.5 % in research and 15.7 % in administration.

[2] Under the condition that about 50% of foreign-trained applicants will signal local accents when

4.6.5 Other Mediators

The second mediation analysis was whether other outcomes mediated the effect of foreign education on hiring intention which includes: 1) innovation 2) competency and 3) sociability. The question that was asked was using a grade of 0 - 100, where 0 is the lowest, and 100 is the highest, indicate how you believe in the following statements. "Co-workers in our organization will enjoy collaborating with Candidate A", "Applicants like Candidate A are usually more competent than others", and "Applicants like Candidate A are usually more innovative than others".

This exercise on mediation was only carried out in one region and not all four regions, meaning the results are less representative. Nonetheless, this approach can estimate the underlying or alternative causal paths that may influence hiring decisions. The result shows that the effect of the mediators (not presented) was very correlated with the school attended and the pathway from the mediators to hiring intention was unimportant. The average causal mediation effect (ACME) was low and had no significant effect. The result shows that competency, social acceptability and innovation are not exclusive when hiring decisions are made.

4.7 Discussion

Following Rivera (2012), recruitment is a type of social ritual and cultural matching — which returnees and related employers are obliged to adhere (Nohl, et al 2006). Social closure implicitly creates a system that helps to enforce control of expected norms among workers (Waldiner and Lichter; 2003). Employers reward applicants within their broader social networks that stem from groups and categories they belong (Fernandez and Galperin 2014, Ibarra 1999). These rewards stem from the need to hire applicants with similar cultural capital.

The interesting question would be why we find a positive effect of accents in some roles and not others. I argue that transnational education is mainly assessed in relation to occupations that may be deemed transnational. The effect of transnationalism which connotes the ability to live a dual identity is observed in transnational occupations and not others. Local employers play a strong emphasis on transnational occupation and are more interested in rewarding candidates who identify with a local-specific cultural capital in a transnational context. In roles where the effect of accents was not observed, the idea of transnationalism or transnational education is weaker. Generally, in roles where there are higher chances that returnees are hired which can be termed "transnational occupation", there are corresponding higher chances that the effect of the local accent will increase hiring intentions.

A critical examination of the roles may provide additional insights. Again, most of the roles scraped from popular job sites that were scraped for this paper reflect the average job description expected for such roles at that time. The job descriptions of software

applying for jobs

engineers and financial analyst roles often reflect similar descriptions across different countries. For others, they are often more directed towards local needs. Though these occupations are advertised within a specific country, occupation scientists believe that nation-states are not confined within a territory and they are divisive categories that migrants navigate through their occupations (Vertovec, 2009). Transnationalism which is identified in specific transitional occupations may force local recruiters to identify and subsequently punish signals of foreign cultural internationalization.

While this paper does not address the reasons returnees select into specific roles, research shows that resource-dependent occupations might be an elite practice which reproduces which certain returnees may have lesser access in their country of migration because of pre-migration constraints. (Skop 2016; Waldinger, 2015) . However, what is intuitively clear is that software engineers and financial analyst positions may require more time to complete due to their heavy professional requirements - which may have been less attractive to households with lesser resources. Additionally, the lower supply of foreign applicants in specific roles may reduce the occupational closure in these roles more than in others. For example, there might be fewer software engineers and financial analysts trained abroad — and conversely, more foreign-trained students in admin, communication and research occupations that retain the roles as less transnational — since applicants in those occupations are often not a rare find.

There is strong evidence that elite occupations are associated with social background and mannerisms (Friedman and Laurison,2020). While students from disadvantaged background select roles where access to jobs are perceived to be easier and offers immediate financial stability (see, e.g., Millett 2003, Hoffer et al. 2003, Walpole 2003); students from privileged backgrounds are able to stay in occupations with a lower payoff if they believe that have higher career prospects (Fourcade et al 2015). This suggests the returns to foreign education may be driven by occupational closure within the system of social inequality that may not be observed by the current financial payoffs in each occupation. Further research is to be done to know whether applicants in software engineers and financial analyst positions are in elite occupations and whether transnational migrants who possess skills in the roles have disproportionate access to the resources required.

4.8 Conclusion

In this paper, I have attempted to improve the under-researched role of the different forms of cultural capital and the labour market's characteristics that influence returnees' economic integration using Nigeria as a case study. The impact of foreign education on the local economy in developing nations can be significant when the effect of cultural capital and the character of the labour market is decomposed.

Previous research has examined the importance of institutional and human capital in the job market success of returnees (Piracha and Vadean 2010; Marchetta, F;2012) but not whether returnees' "embodied" state affect their economic integration – which I argue can not be separated from other forms of cultural capital. Returnees that signal foreign internationalization which is indexed as foreign accents reduce their employment chances. However, it is important to note that this penalty does not overturn the benefit of foreign education in these roles. I found that foreign accents slightly improves the

intention to hire foreign-trained applicant, compared to those trained locally in software and finance occupation. Additionally, in the strength of the relationship between foregin education and hiring intentions are largely shaped by local accent in research, communication and administration occupations.

Returnees have different forms of cultural capital that may be rewarded or punished in the labour market. As expounded by Bourdieu, capital may be (1) institutional which is the premium gained from being formerly affiliated with a foreign institution, (2) gained from the skills learned abroad and (3) because a returnee chooses to share a specific embodiment in her homeland. Historically, a homecomer is said to meet life at home to be longer accessible in immediacy because his personality has been broken down into pieces (Schütz, A, 1945). Ayandele (1974) refers to Nigerian returnees as a deluded hybrid - that though born black have the cultural and social ambition of the whites.

Additionally, I contribute to previous evidence that there is heterogeneity in the returns from foreign education, including the length of stay in host countries, type of degree earned and region of return (Hania Janta et al, 2021; Du, Z et al 20210). I found that foreign education is preferred in specific occupations (software and finance) and not others. These preferred roles can be referred to as "transnational occupations" where social fields are multistranded and can be sustained across countries of origin and destination (Basch et al 1994). This result suggests that not all potential fields of study and career prospects empower the returnee (Laliberte, 2014).

Reintegration programs in Taiwan, India and China (Chaudhary and Hamdani, 2002; Gmelch, 1987; Kapur and McHale, 2005; Xu, 2010) have focused on local-specific cultural capital and labour market realities. Cole and Kelly (2000) show that locally constructed discourses actively shape the labour market dynamic of Singaporean returnees via the Foreign Talent program.

This paper opens the bar for a few pertinent questions. Are educated returnees more likely to be integrated when they are seeking jobs in occupations that have lesser cultural constraints — which include whether they are better integrated as innovating intrapreneurs or entrepreneurs than as job seekers? Studies in other contexts already show that Albanian and Egyptian returnees are more likely to start their own businesses than non-migrants (Piracha and Vadean 2010; Marchetta, F, 2012).

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.1 Appendix

.1.1 Lessons from The Taiwanese Return Migration Experience

Like many African nations, numerous highly-trained Taiwanese professionals moved to the US in the 1950s and 1960s, leading to significant concerns about brain drain. The trend is still the same because, in 2005, OECD data shows that Nigeria and Taiwan (China, Taipei) are countries with the highest highly-educated emigration rates with 69.8 percent and 60.5 percent respectively, and remained the top two in 2008 with the global average I generated from the data was 14.2 percent [1]

In the 1960s, while 21,248 students left Taiwan for advanced studies, only 1,172 returned to Taiwan, resulting in a retention rate of a mere 5 percent (Chang,1992))[2]

In the early 1960s, Taiwan faced the need to improve its economy and increase labour-intensive exports. Professor Sho-Chieh Tsiang from Cornell University, USA along with his friend Ta-Chung Liu, proposed the idea of export-oriented products, which was accepted by the Taiwanese parliament in 1958 (Thorbecke, 2022). As a result, Taiwan was able to export 2 million radios to the US by 1966 and between 1967 and 1974, the value of Taiwan's textile exports increased 12 times (Yoshitomi, 2003).

The Taiwanese Government' Move for US Returnees (1974 - 1980)

In 1974, Pan Wen Yuan, a Stanford-trained Taiwanese who had worked as a research scientist at Radio Corporation of America (RCA), a major American electronics company, identified semiconductors as a key product and proposed a plan for the development of the IT industry in Taiwan. The government accepted his plan and established the Research & Development Center of Electronics Industries (later called Electronics Research & Service Organization - ERSO) as part of the Industrial Technology Research Institute (ITRI) in September of the same year. The centre also recruited Chinese engineers working in America.

In 1976, Taiwan contracted RCA for 7.0-micron technology, and RCA agreed to transfer design, process, manufacturing management, and cost accounting knowledge, even teaching ERSO how to build its accounting system (Thorbecke, 2022).

By 1979, the flagship agenda of the Taiwanese President and Minister of Finance was the establishment of the Hsinchu Industrial Park with the goal of attracting US-trained Taiwanese IT experts to replicate their US experience in Taiwan. Dr Irving Ho, a former IBM employee with 34 US patents, was invited to become the first director[3]. As already mentioned, while only 5 percent of returnees came back in the 1960s, the percentage of returnees improved significantly from 1971 to 1985, with an overall retention rate averaging about 15 percent (Chang, 1992)

[1] https://www.oecd.org/els/mig/dioc.htm.

[2] Data from the Republic of China National Youth Commission (NYC)

[3] [10] Taiwan's Silicon Valley: The Evolution of Hsinchu Industrial Park: https://fsi.stanford.edu/events/taiwans_silicon_valley_the_evolution_of_hsinchu_industrial_park

The Impact: The Hsinchu Industrial Park

By the year 2000, it was recorded that Taiwan's IT sector had become the world's third-largest, responsible for producing around two-thirds of the world's semiconductor supply (Saxenian and Hsu, 2001). The firms in the *Hsinchu Industrial Park* generated a total of 1.091 trillion New Taiwan dollars in 2019, which accounted for around 6% of Taiwan's gross domestic product and nearly 12% of its exports. The country's economic transformation is believed to owe much to the performance of companies registered in Hsinchu Science Park (Iredale and Guo, 2001).

Miin Wu, the founder of Macronix International, is an example of the program's success. Wu, who was born on the Chinese mainland and moved to Taiwan in the 1940s, earned a master's degree at Stanford University and worked for various semiconductor companies in Silicon Valley. In 1989, he returned to Taiwan with approximately 40 US-trained Taiwanese engineers to establish Macronix [1]

.1.2 Aligning my Findings on the Labour Market Integration of Returnees with Lessons from Hsinchu Industrial Park

There are two strategic approaches that I have identified from Hsinchu Industrial Park in Taiwan that increase the likelihood of successfully incorporating foreign knowledge. These approaches align with some of the findings in my research and are discussed below:

- **Embed Returnees' new knowledge with Local Expertise**: The availability of high economic incentives, such as tax incentives and freedom from import duties, were not the only significant factors in the success of the Hsinchu Industrial Park. While the parks have attracted a number of foreign-trained students, the influence of local talents played has been significant. For example, the majority of the staff at the park are locals from neighbouring universities, specifically the National Tsing Hua University and National Chiao Tung University, which were already located in the town of Hsinchu (Courtenay, 1993). The Industrial Technology Research Institute was also situated in the same town. The construction of the park was inspired by the success of Silicon Valley in the US, which is closely linked to the neighbouring schools of UC Berkeley and Stanford.

- **Use Returnees' new knowledge to strengthen opportunities in a Transnational "Tech" Occupation Market:** The *Hsinchu Industrial Park* aimed to attract high-tech entrepreneurs by providing them with favourable investment and living environments. However, the Taiwanese government mainly focused on creating new markets for "high-tech" products and services, which were an extension of the transnational opportunities with the United States that had already been established with the tech industries since the 1960s.

[1] How a small Taiwanese city transformed the global chip industry. https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Technology/How-a-small-Taiwanese-city-transformed-the-global-chip-industry

.1.3 Text of Candidates' Pitches

Candidate 1 In addition to my resume that you just read, I would like to say that I am very imaginative and inventive. I am ready to implement new approaches. I also want to say that I admire this great institution, and I look forward to working with other team members. I believe that my education and skills have prepared me for this job. I am hoping to receive from you soon. Thank you!.

Candidate 2 Thank you for reviewing my resume. I have followed the achievements of this institution for years, and it's been astounding. I will be very delighted to work with you. I have proven records for being super creative. I am a team player. I do have great work ethic. I am confident that my current knowledge and skills have prepared me for opportunity. I look forward to a response from you..

Candidate 3 I appreciate your time in reading my application. I would also like to add that I have profound experience in introducing novel projects. I am a great manager and people-oriented. My previous experiences reinforce my qualifications and aptitude to compete for this job, in this great institution. I look forward to doing inspiring work at your institution..

Candidate 4 In addition to what you have read, I will bring to your institution what I have done in the past. I am highly rigorous, detailed and I am known for thinking outside the box. I am also a good listener and team player. I believe I will be a good fit for this institution. I will look forward to discussing my qualifications further. I find this role very interesting and challenging.

Candidate 5 I will appreciate the opportunity to contribute innovative ideas to current work and projects in this highly respected institution. I believe I am a perfect fit for the role. I have well-rounded experience and the zeal for personal and team achievements. I will be happy to respond to further questions and clarification considering my experience - thanking you once again..

Candidate 6 I will like to add that I look forward to an opportunity for a personal meeting. I am confident that I will be an asset to this institution, and look forward to providing newer approaches to current procedures. I am known for excellent performance and for implementing best practices. I have the right skills, the team-spirit, and qualifications for this job. Thank you for taking the time to read my application, and I will be happy to hear back from you soon.

.1.4 What Norms are Contested by Local Employers?

I conducted interviews with 51 local employers across different sectors and regions in Nigeria to better understand the norms associated with foreign education that are contested. I describe the employers' responses into two broad categories which are that they may reject any associated premium of foreign education because they perceived that (1) returnees have different work expectations that deter them from a localized approach to work and (2) the belief that returnees always have higher competency are perceived to be untrue — and employers who are aloof about the possibility of an education premium from foreign education may be eager to change the standard narrative.

I further explain the two norms categorized above. The first contested norm is that employers may believe that living in Nigeria is a skill in itself and that those trained abroad are not able to navigate the work environment and social interactions required to work locally, especially in a way that those trained locally can. This also includes unpaid overtime work and unrestrained job descriptions. I share examples from the field notes of a local employer who captured some of the work schedules and nature of work that are perceived to conflict with expectations from foreign-trained applicants. Employers believe that the local work requirements are highly flexible and working conditions may be inconsistent with what foreign-trained may adapt to. The perception that foreign work culture may be incongruous with local working norms is a source of contestation - and employers with this mindset may judge returnees as culturally unfit.

> *Well on a serious note truth be told, being in Nigeria alone is a skill you have - working under pressure, and multi-tasking, especially these two characteristics, working under pressure and multi-tasking, we in Nigeria have this attribute more than people from outside the country because to them there is this level playing ground, easy access to things and doing the task on their own pace like they always have this option to work at their own comfort.* - Field Note Jan 2022

Second, is that employers believe that educated returnees should not strictly be regarded as more competent because they studied abroad and that some locally educated applicants may have higher competency or subject-matter professional skills. This simply connotes that educated returnees may not be technically different from those trained locally in specific roles. I draw an example from an employer's view that also captures the esteemed position of a locally-trained employer.

> *I believe so much in our locally trained candidates, most of our locally trained students are all exported abroad through scholarship means and the like. The US, UK, and Canada are offering sweet opportunities to our people in form of fully funded scholarships. I believe this is due to the fact that they are very competent and well-trained. It's longer news that most Nigerian candidates who studied in Polytechnics are very vast when it comes to practicals. I wrote a professional exam alongside some of the people who studied abroad in 2018 and I did amazingly great even more than those that studied abroad. In my own opinion, it's not really about where you studied, it's more about your attitude to learning, so studying abroad does not guarantee a candidate will do well.* - Field Note Feb 2022

.1.5 Summary Statistics

Summary Statistics by School Attended
Local vs Foreign Institution

Characteristic	**N**	**abroad**, N = 831[1]	**local**, N = 1,690[1]	**p**[2]
Employer Grade	2,521	70 (50, 80)	60 (50, 80)	0.002
Age	2,521			0.3
20-25		274 (33%)	550 (33%)	
26-30		295 (35%)	561 (33%)	
31-40		262 (32%)	579 (34%)	
Ethnic Names	2,521			0.7
HausaNames		365 (44%)	719 (43%)	
IgboNames		247 (30%)	499 (30%)	
localaccent		0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
YorubaNames		219 (26%)	472 (28%)	
Gender	2,521			0.6
female		422 (51%)	875 (52%)	
male		409 (49%)	815 (48%)	
Accent	2,521			<0.001
Foreign Accent		526 (63%)	0 (0%)	
Local Accent		305 (37%)	1,690 (100%)	
Language	2,521			0.8
English and pidgin		405 (49%)	833 (49%)	
English only		426 (51%)	857 (51%)	
Academic Performance	2,521			0.3
a top 20 percent		265 (32%)	577 (34%)	
a top 10 percent		293 (35%)	546 (32%)	
an average		273 (33%)	567 (34%)	
Work Experience	2,521			0.3
has no significant experience		409 (49%)	866 (51%)	
two years work experience		422 (51%)	824 (49%)	
Network	2,521			0.8
Member of		424 (51%)	870 (51%)	
Not a member of		407 (49%)	820 (49%)	

Civil Status	2,521			>0.9
Married		435 (52%)	889 (53%)	
Single		396 (48%)	801 (47%)	
Degree	2,521			0.005
Bachelor's		388 (47%)	890 (53%)	
Masters'		443 (53%)	800 (47%)	
Country Level	2,521			0.7
One State in Nigeria		438 (53%)	908 (54%)	
Multiple States in Nigeria		214 (26%)	410 (24%)	
Transnational		179 (22%)	372 (22%)	
Ethnicity	2,521			
Bini/Esan		51 (6.1%)	94 (5.6%)	
Efik/Ibibio		29 (3.5%)	66 (3.9%)	
Hausa/Fulani		34 (4.1%)	69 (4.1%)	
Ibo		185 (22%)	376 (22%)	
Ijaw		57 (6.9%)	123 (7.3%)	
Nupe		2 (0.2%)	4 (0.2%)	
Others		124 (15%)	266 (16%)	
Yoruba		349 (42%)	692 (41%)	
Years evaluating role	2,521	6.0 (4.0, 9.0)	6.0 (4.0, 9.0)	0.5
Sex	2,521			0.064
Female		238 (29%)	557 (33%)	
Male		591 (71%)	1,130 (67%)	
Others		2 (0.2%)	3 (0.2%)	
Firm size	2,521			0.049
1-10		348 (42%)	658 (39%)	
101-200		18 (2.2%)	42 (2.5%)	
11-20		121 (15%)	295 (17%)	
21-50		135 (16%)	266 (16%)	
51-100		71 (8.5%)	192 (11%)	
above 200		138 (17%)	237 (14%)	
Sector	2,521			0.4
Private sector (entertainment and arts only)		63 (7.6%)	150 (8.9%)	
nonprofits		40 (4.8%)	67 (4.0%)	
Private sector(others)		617 (74%)	1,274 (75%)	

Public sector		111 (13%)	199 (12%)	
Region	2,521			0.2
Multiple States		93 (11%)	199 (12%)	
North		164 (20%)	374 (22%)	
South East/South		289 (35%)	602 (36%)	
SouthWest		285 (34%)	515 (30%)	
Unknown		0	0	

[1]n (%); Median (IQR)

[2]Pearson's Chi-squared test; Fisher's exact test; Wilcoxon rank sum test

.1.6 Candidates Attributes

Table .7: Survey Attributes

S/N	Variable Names	Recoded Names	Categories	Rationale
1	Schooling profile	School Abroad	Belington College after a three-year degree program in Worcester, UK	The name sounds like a foreign school but it doesn't exist. This is to remove the effect of prestige that may be associated with any foreign school. "After" was used to emphasizes that the schooling was abroad and not online
			Willfield College after a four-year program in Chichester, USA	Same as above
		School Locally	University of Ibadan (UI)	Nigeria is divided into three broad regions (North, South and West) UI is located and associated with Southern Nigeria. Leading Institution in Northern Nigeria.
			Ahmadu Bello University (ABU)	
			University of Nigeria, Enugu (UNN)	
			Covenant University (CU)	

Table .7 continued from previous page

S/N	Variable Names	Recoded Variable Names	Categories	Rationale
2	Gender	Men Women	Men Women	
3	Age	Young working age	20-25	It does not seem plausible that a college graduate will be less than 19 years of age
		working age	26-30	
		working age	31-40	It does not seem plausible that recent college graduates will be above 40 years of age
4	Marital Status	Single Married	Single Married	
5	Degree	Master's	Master's	PhD was not included due to other attributes that might be associated with the holder.
		Bachelor's	Bachelor's	
6	Experience	Low work experience	has no significant work experience; and has little practical experience in	Recent graduates are more likely to have no work experience

Table .7 continued from previous page

S/N	Variable Names	Recoded Variable Names	Categories	Rationale
		High work experience	main experience has been two years' work experience, with practical expertise in	Recent graduates are more likely to have less than two years of work experience, either locally or internationally
7	Grade	Excellent	a top 10 percent	Top 10 percent is likely to mean one of the best.
		Very Good	a top 30 percent	Top 30 percent is likely to mean close to the best.
		Average	average	I did not include those who graduated with below average grades because in most cases they do not include this attribute in their resume.

Table .7 continued from previous page

S/N	Variable Names	Recoded Variable Names	Categories	Rationale
8	Language	Pidgin English	Speaks English and Pidgin Fluently	I expect that those who can speak in pidgin are more accustomed to the local culture.
		No-Pidgin English	Speaks English Fluently	
9	Hobbies	Neutral	playing football	Nothing specific
		Neutral	playing tennis	Nothing specific
10	Network	Member	Member of	Binary outcome
		Non-member	Not a member of	Binary outcome
11	First Names	Yoruba-ethnic names	Opeyemi	Gender-neutral
		Yoruba-ethnic names	Mayowa	Gender-neutral
		Hausa-ethnic names	Auta	Gender-neutral
		Hausa-ethnic names	Kaka	Gender-neutral
		Igbo-ethnic names	Ugochukwu	Gender-neutral
		Igbo-ethnic names	Amadi	Gender-neutral
12	Surnames		George	English/Colonial names(neutral)
			Edward	English/Colonial names(neutral)

Table .7 continued from previous page

S/N	Variable Names	Recoded Variable Names	Categories	Rationale
			Sawaba	English/Colonial names(neutral)
			William	English/Colonial names(neutral)

.1.7 Robustness Check

Table .8: By Role

	(Soft)	(Comm)	(Admin)	(Research)	(Finance)
School Attended (Ref: Foreign)					
Locally trained	-0.172***	-0.008	-0.012	-0.034	-0.07*
	(0.053)	(0.069)	(0.037)	(0.054)	(0.041)
Accent (Ref: Foreign)					
Local Accent	0.064	-0.010	0.025	-0.037	-0.036
	(0.069)	(0.088)	(0.053)	(0.071)	(0.053)
Local prof. network (Ref: Member)					
Not a member	-0.101**	−0.006	−0.020	−0.016	−0.042
	(0.038)	(0.034)	(0.021)	(0.028)	(0.028)
Work Experience (ref: little or no)					
Two yrs experience	0.264***	0.107**	0.146***	0.161***	0.206***
	(0.041)	(0.037)	(0.021)	(0.029)	(0.029)
Degree (ref: Bachelor's)					
Masters'	0.078*	0.029	0.056**	0.054	0.055
	(0.044)	(0.038)	(0.023)	(0.031)	(0.032)
Observations	396	504	796	393	432
R^2	0.482	0.383	0.468	0.421	0.467
Employer Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

"Soft" is software engineer roles, "Comm" is communication roles, "Admin" is administration roles, "Research" is Research roles and "Finance" is Finance Analyst. Ethnic names, vignette order, firm level of operations (multinational or local), quadratic vignette order, Key Recruiting Officer (KRO)'s ethnicity, gender and age, and KRO's years of experience are controlled for in all models. Included are the interaction of institution * sector, and institution and job roles. Standard errors are in parentheses. *Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.00

Figure .3: Result of job roles scraped from jobberman.com from June -Aug 2021