

**Pull Factors and Migration Intentions Among Early-Career Nurses: A Cross-  
Sectional Survey Example**

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## Abstract

Pull factors are destination-based conditions that attract migrants, often shaping where people relocate once they decide to leave their country of origin. This sample study examined how perceived pull factors—job opportunities, higher standard of living, professional development, and safety—predict migration intentions among final-year nursing students. A cross-sectional survey (N = 180) was conducted using a structured questionnaire measuring perceived pull factors and likelihood of migrating within two years. Multiple linear regression indicated that perceived job opportunities and professional development were the strongest predictors of migration intention, while safety contributed modestly after controlling for demographics. The findings illustrate how pull factors operate as “attractors” in migration decision-making and provide a practical, research-paper example suitable for academic writing. Implications include workforce planning strategies that reduce the perceived gap between local and destination opportunities and improve retention through career pathways.

**Keywords:** pull factors, migration intention, nurses, job opportunities, professional development

## Introduction

Migration is commonly explained through a push–pull framework in which adverse conditions in home countries encourage people to leave, while attractive conditions in another country draw them toward a specific destination (Lee, 1966). In health workforce contexts, migration is frequently discussed because shortages in one region can coincide with strong demand and better employment conditions elsewhere. Although “push factors” may trigger the desire to leave, pull factors often determine the chosen destination and the intensity of the intention to migrate.

For early-career nurses, pull factors can include higher wages, better working conditions, clearer promotion pathways, access to specialty training, and improved quality of life. These destination advantages are “positive aspects” that are perceived as providing a better future compared to remaining in the country of origin (Castles et al., 2014). Understanding which pull factors most strongly predict migration intention can support retention strategies and inform policy responses that address professional expectations and labor market realities.

This paper provides a research-paper example focused on the following question: **Which perceived pull factors are most strongly associated with migration intention among final-year nursing students?** The study tests two hypotheses: **H1:** Perceived job opportunities will positively predict migration intention. **H2:** Perceived professional development opportunities will positively predict migration intention, beyond job opportunities.

## Literature review

The push–pull model remains one of the most widely used conceptual tools for summarizing why people migrate, even though real-world migration is multi-causal and influenced by individual, household, labor market, and policy dynamics (Lee, 1966). Pull factors are destination-based “attractors,” such as strong employment markets, stability, safety,

and social services. They are often perceived as benefits that justify the costs of relocating, including emotional separation from family and the financial burden of moving.

Economic explanations of migration emphasize expected income differences and employment probabilities between origin and destination contexts, implying that job opportunities and perceived earnings potential can strongly influence migration decisions (Todaro, 1969). In professional fields, pull factors also include career mobility, skill development, and workplace resources that support competence and progression. For nurses, these may be perceived as access to advanced clinical roles, mentorship structures, better staffing ratios, and supportive leadership cultures.

Additionally, migration decisions can be shaped by perceived quality-of-life advantages in developed countries, including personal safety, stable infrastructure, and predictable institutions. These perceptions can interact with career goals, especially for young adults who cannot find a lucrative job or who face limited opportunities for specialization. Taken together, the literature supports examining job opportunities and professional development as central pull factors, with safety and living standards as complementary influences (Castles et al., 2014).

## **Methods**

### **Design**

A cross-sectional, correlational survey design was used to examine associations between perceived pull factors and migration intention.

### **Participants and setting**

Participants were final-year nursing students recruited from two nursing schools in an urban region. Inclusion criteria were: (a) enrollment in the final year of nursing training and (b) age 18 years or older. A total of **180** students completed the survey.

## Measures

**Demographics.** Participants reported age, gender, and whether they had immediate family abroad (yes/no).

**Perceived pull factors.** Pull factors were measured using four subscales rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Higher scores indicated stronger perceived pull.

1. **Job opportunities (4 items)** (e.g., “I believe I would have better job opportunities abroad than locally.”)
2. **Professional development (4 items)** (e.g., “Specialty training and career advancement are more accessible abroad.”)
3. **Standard of living (3 items)** (e.g., “Quality of life is better in my preferred destination country.”)
4. **Safety and stability (3 items)** (e.g., “I would feel safer and more secure in my preferred destination.”)

**Migration intention.** Intention to migrate within two years was measured with a 3-item scale (e.g., “I plan to migrate within two years after graduation.”), rated 1–5 and averaged.

## Procedure

After institutional approval, recruitment occurred via classroom announcements and email. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Students completed the survey online in approximately 8–10 minutes.

## Data analysis

Descriptive statistics summarized demographics and scale means. Pearson correlations examined bivariate relationships. Multiple linear regression tested predictors of migration intention. Statistical significance was set at  $p < .05$ .

## Results

### Descriptive statistics

Participants had a mean age of 23.7 years (SD = 2.1). Most identified as female (68%). Approximately 35% reported having immediate family abroad. Mean scores suggested moderately high perceptions of destination advantages, especially for job opportunities and professional development.

**Table 1**

Descriptive statistics for study variables (N = 180)

- Job opportunities: M = 4.10, SD = 0.62
- Professional development: M = 4.02, SD = 0.66
- Standard of living: M = 3.85, SD = 0.71
- Safety and stability: M = 3.60, SD = 0.74
- Migration intention: M = 3.95, SD = 0.78

### Correlations

Migration intention correlated positively with job opportunities ( $r = .62$ ), professional development ( $r = .59$ ), standard of living ( $r = .41$ ), and safety ( $r = .30$ ). Job opportunities and professional development were also strongly correlated ( $r = .65$ ), suggesting related but distinct constructs.

### Regression analysis

A multiple regression model including all four pull factors and demographics explained 49% of the variance in migration intention ( $R^2 = .49$ ). Job opportunities ( $\beta = .40$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and professional development ( $\beta = .32$ ,  $p < .001$ ) were the strongest predictors. Standard of living was smaller but significant ( $\beta = .12$ ,  $p = .04$ ). Safety was not significant after controlling for the other pull factors ( $\beta = .06$ ,  $p = .21$ ). Having family abroad showed a modest positive association with intention ( $\beta = .11$ ,  $p = .03$ ).

### Discussion

This example study demonstrates how pull factors—particularly perceived job opportunities and professional development—can strongly predict intention to migrate among emerging nurses. Consistent with push–pull theory, participants who believed the destination offered better employment prospects and clearer career pathways reported stronger plans to relocate (Lee, 1966). In practical terms, these findings suggest that the “attractive” features of a destination may shape migration decisions even when the study does not directly measure the “push” pressures in home countries.

The strong effects of job opportunities and professional development align with economic and labor-market interpretations of migration, where individuals compare expected outcomes across settings and choose the option that maximizes perceived benefit (Todaro, 1969). For early-career nurses, professional development can be experienced as a concrete pathway to specialization, leadership roles, and stable long-term earning potential. This may explain why professional development remained significant even when job opportunities were included in the model.

Standard of living had a smaller but meaningful association, indicating that quality-of-life perceptions add motivation beyond employment considerations. Safety and stability, while correlated with migration intention, did not remain significant in the full model, suggesting that safety may matter most when economic and career needs are already met or when risk levels are high enough to override other considerations. This pattern fits broader migration scholarship emphasizing that multiple factors combine, but their relative weight varies by context and population (Castles et al., 2014).

### Implications

For workforce retention, the results imply that reducing nurse outmigration may require addressing the pull-factor “gap” through clearer promotion ladders, expanded specialty training opportunities, transparent hiring processes, and improved early-career support. Even when a

country cannot match developed-country wages, strengthening structured career pathways and professional development can reduce the perceived necessity of migration.

### Limitations

This is a cross-sectional design, so causal claims cannot be made. The sample is limited to two schools and may not represent all nursing students. Self-report measures may be influenced by social desirability or current events. Future research could include longitudinal designs and measure both push factors (origin pressures) and pull factors (destination attractors) simultaneously.

### Conclusion

Pull factors help explain why people choose specific destinations and how attractive conditions—especially job opportunities and professional development—shape migration intentions. In this sample research-paper example, perceived job opportunities and professional development were the strongest predictors of planned migration among final-year nursing students. The findings reinforce the practical value of identifying which destination advantages matter most and suggest retention strategies focused on career pathways and training access.

### References

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**Appendix A: Sample questionnaire items (optional)****Job opportunities (example items)**

1. I believe I would have better job opportunities abroad than locally.
2. I believe it would be easier to secure stable employment abroad.

**Professional development (example items)**

1. Specialty training opportunities are more accessible abroad.
2. Career advancement is faster in my preferred destination country.

**Migration intention (example items)**

1. I plan to migrate within two years after graduation.
2. I am actively preparing to relocate after graduation.

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