

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION ON KASSEL, GERMANY: AN OBSERVATION

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Abstract

The study intended to examine the impact of immigration on the Kassel city, Germany. While there is extensive literature on the causes of migration and its economic effects, this study investigates the correlation between immigration and the economic impact on the host city. A qualitative approach through participant observation and a non-participant observation were adopted for the study. The inquiry from the inside and outside along with previously published studies were used to evaluate the impact of immigration in the city of Kassel. Based on the inquiry from the inside and outside, the study found sufficient evidence of an empirically significant impact of immigration in the city of Kassel. Use of observation methods in qualitative research is a powerful approach in examining the impact of immigration in the host country. Through this approach, this study was able to pinpoint the policy implications for the city council of Kassel, Germany.

Keywords: Immigration, Economic impact, Immigration surplus, Employment, Wages, Germany

INTRODUCTION

It is estimated that before the end of 2015 over one million refugees will come to Germany to seek asylum, why Angela Merkel Christian Democratic Union (CDU) has initiated moves for Germany to accommodate most of these refugees, her political opponents have criticized the German Chancellor for her open door policy with regard to the migration of thousand Syrian refugees running away from the conflict in Syria. The gesture of Angela Merkel has been considered to be unprecedented in the history of Germany.

The question on the lips of policymakers, academics, trade unionists and development experts, is what will be the impact of the open door policy of the German government. Why some analysts have projected that Germany will benefit in the long run from the migration of these refugees, others have a negative perception of it.

Every year thousands of migrants from developing countries cross the oceans to get to Europe in search for jobs without minding the type of jobs they are going to do. The high level of poverty, unemployment, and insecurity prompted these migrants to look for any types of legal work that can sustain them and their family back home. The disparity and unbalance nature of the world economy have also been blamed for labour migration to advanced countries.

The concern about the demographic change in Germany has made researchers to predict in the nearest future there will be a shortage of workers in the country and this was corroborated by a study by the Bertelsmann Institute. The study stresses that without immigrants, German labour force is likely to diminish. Should this be the reason why the German Government plans to take up to 800, 000 refugees in 2015?. According to the International Labour Organization, “migrant workers are increasingly in demand, not only for high-skilled information technology and professional jobs, but also for many of the low-paid, less skilled jobs in agriculture, cleaning and maintenance, construction, domestic service, and health care” (ILO, 2006).

Aside from the issue of labour migration fostering globalization, it is believed that labour migration has a positive impact on the receiving and the sending countries. To subscribe to the assumption that labour migration has a positive impact on the country of destinations. The Spanish Government projected that within the period of 1996-2005, one-third of the country average annual economic growth was owing to immigration (Sebastián, 2006). In a similar manner, migrants’ remittances aid development in developing countries. This is how Rhyne puts it, “remittances put large sums of money into circulation in countries in Latin America for the purchase of goods and services that boost the economy. In this way, remittance flows have a positive impact on economic development” (Rhyne, 2007).

This present study does not attempt to develop a new theory on immigration and economic growth, however, it aims at filling the gap in the literature through investigating the nexus between immigration and the positive economic impact using participant observation and non-participant analysis between the period of 2015 and 2016.

In order to limit the scope of the study, this paper focuses on the economic impact of immigration on the Kassel city, Germany. Any conclusion reached here would then have to be considered in light of whether immigration is desirable or undesirable for other reasons. The rest of the study is structured as follows: The review of literature on the causal relationship between

immigration and the economic impact on the host country is described in section 2. Section 3 discusses the theoretical framework through which immigration may have an impact on the economy of the receiving countries. The methods adopted for the study is discussed in Section 4. The trends and pattern of international migration in the city of Kassel are examined in Section 5. Section 6 explores the impact of immigration on Kassel. Section 7 provides the conclusion and policy implications.

THE IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION: A REVIEW OF ECONOMIC EVIDENCE

The issue of the positive impact of labour migration in the host countries continues to vibrate in the academic circle. Empirical evidence from academic scholars has shown that labour migrant impacted their host countries positively as well as the sending nations. On the other hand, some studies have berated this notion.

Talking about the fiscal impact of labour migration in the host country, Auerbach and Oreopoulos, 1999; Lee and Miller, 2000, (1991), Dolores-Collado et al. (2004) Mayr (2005) Böninet al. (2000) Börsch-Supan (1994) find a positive impact of labour migration in Austral, Germany, Spain and the United States. However, some academic researchers have a negative perception of this claim (see Schou (2006) Storesletten (2003) National Academy of Sciences 1997) for more details on this. In the case of the OECD report in 2013, using pooled data from 2007 to 2009 on twenty-seven OECD countries, the outcome of the investigation on the impact of labour migration indicates that some countries experienced a negative impact while others observed a positive impact (OECD, 2013).

Just as empirical evidence has proved that labour migrants promote the economic growth of their home countries through remittances, there has also been proof that labour migrants contribute to the economic growth of their host countries. According to the ILO through its Labour Office in Geneva, “migrants contribute to economic growth in numerous ways – by filling labour market needs in high-skills and low-skill segments of the market, rejuvenating populations, improving labour market efficiency, promoting entrepreneurship, spurring urban renewal, and injecting dynamism and diversity into destination countries and societies” (ILO, 57:2010).

As the impact of labour migrants in the destination country cannot be emphasized (OECD, 2010; ILO, 2010; Borjas, 1995) asserts that with evidence from existing literature is certain that there is a positive correlation between labour migration and economic growth of receiving countries of migrants.

The notion that labour migration increases the unemployment of the natives has been counted-proof by (Marr, 1997; Winegarden and Khor, 1991; Withers and Pope (1993; Marr and

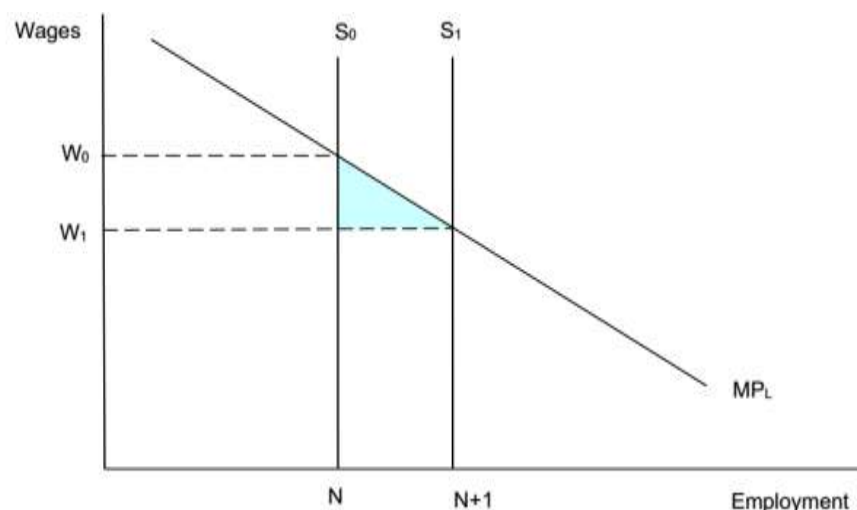
Siklos, 1994, 1995; Konya 2000; Akbari and DeVoretz, 2002) Also using Granger causality tests, the translog specification of the production function, structural disequilibrium modelling, and causality testing in Australia, Canada and the United States, they find no correlation between labour migration and the increase of unemployment of domestic workers.

Another area that labour migration has been considered to be crucial in advanced economics is the area of demographic changes vis a vis reduction birth rate and an increase in life spans. There is always a vacuum to be filled when a country is experiencing an ageing population and low fertility rate. The aim of this research paper is to examine the economic impact of international labour migrants in Kassel, Germany

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The section of the paper outlines the key theoretical framework through which immigration may impact the economy of the host nation vis a vis labour market. Different theoretical models have been used to buttress the positive correlation between immigration and the economic impact. The most popular theories are the trade, labour and growth models. However, in this study, the labour model that was popularized by Borajas (2000), will be the theoretical guide.

Figure 1: The Immigration Surplus



Source: Adopted from Moody, C. (2006), pp. 11.

The labour market model also known as the immigration surplus is used to examine the impact of an upsurge in migration on the host nation (Moody, 2006). In the immigration surplus, wages and employment depend on the nexus between labour supply (S) and labour demand. In the short run in this case, is determined by the marginal product of Labour (MPL). When foreign

migrants have not entered the country, wages stand at W_0 and only indigenous workers are employed (N). After the arrival of foreign migrants, the supply of labour increases, that is, there is a shift in the supply curve to the right for S_0 to S_1 . This prompted the market wage to slide to W_1 (all other things being equal). This made indigenous workers earn reduced wage while total employment expanded to $N + 1$, whereas, the total output of the economy increases. The total output is symbolized in the surface area beneath the marginal product curve to the left side of the supply curve. This surface area is bigger owing to the increment in labour supply (ibid). The enlargement in the output brings forth a growth in the income for the owners of the factors of production as well as income for foreign migrants. Moody (2006) affirms that in this case, the reduction or loss in wages to indigenous workers “is more than offset” by the expansion in the income due to the owners of the factors of production. The outcome is a net expansion in national income which in turn will favour the host country. In this scenario, the expansion is the “immigration surplus”. The green triangular spot in Figure 1 stood for the surplus. According to Moody “the surplus arises because immigrants increase national income by more than the cost of hiring them. If there are positive externalities from immigration, the gain is even greater. Certain conditions are required to produce an immigration surplus. The model assumes that the supplies of capital and of both native and foreign-born labour are perfectly inelastic and that immigrant workers are perfect substitutes for native workers” (Moody, 2006: 11).

There have been some flaws associated with the calculation of the immigration surplus, for instance, economic experts presume that immigration only increases the economy labour endowment of the host country. Furthermore, the calculation of the immigration surplus shows that immigrants affect the wages of indigenous workers (Borjas, 1995).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

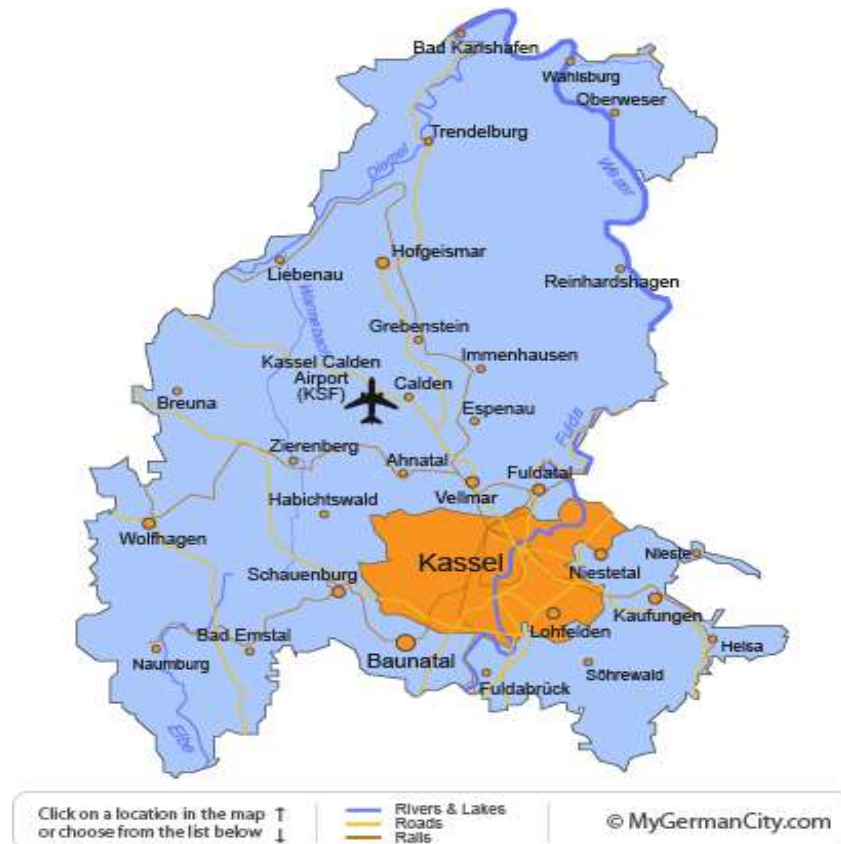
For this study, research design a qualitative research through observation carried out between January 2015 and April 2016. An inclusive review of the literature on the impact of labour migration in Germany and other advanced nations was carried out including the analysis on social and cultural, economic, demographic and political impact. Furthermore, the study uses data that compose of an annual observation spanning the period of between 2015 and 2016.

Location of Study

The research was conducted in Kassel and Environs. The city is located on river Fulda and as of 2015; the population of the city was approximately estimated to be 279,300. The city has an effective transport system, an urban university, numerous parks which include Bergpark

Wiihelmshohe, a UNESCO World Heritage site. The land mass of Kassel is 107km² (41 sq mi). The city is run by a political head calls the Bürgermeister. The current Bürgermeister is Bertram Hilgen of the Social Democratic Party (SDP).

Figure 2: Map of Kassel District



Source: MyGermanyCity, 2010

Research Instruments

Participant observation

Participant observation is a qualitative method of data gathering through observation, interviewing and document analysis (Kawulich, 2005). Different definitions have been used to describe what participant observation is. Marshall and Rossman (1989:79) define observation as “the systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study”. Through participant observation, researchers familiarize themselves about the actions of the population under study in the natural setting by means of observing and participating in those activities (Kawulich, 2005). Schensul et al. (1999:91) described participant observation as the process of learning through exposure to or involvement in the day-to-day or routine activities

of participants in the research setting”. One unique feature of participant observation according to Barnard (1994) is the way deception and impression management are involved in it. He stresses that participant observation is a method of instituting relationship within a community and learning to behave in such a way so to mingle into the community so that its population will behave naturally, “then removing oneself from the setting or community to immerse oneself in the data to understand what is going on and able to write about it” (cited in Kawulich, 2005).

Unstructured Observation (Non-Participant)

There is different between participant observation and non-participant observation. The former involves the researcher living as a member of the subject while the latter denotes the researcher watching the subjects of his or her study. Some activities of observation methods involve the taking of notes, noting down when the researcher sees something interesting without jumping to conclusions straight away. Furthermore, the researcher looks for evidence and asks for the confirmation of things. One advantage of non-observation methods is that it is a weighty method of collecting comprehensive data in qualitative research. However, some of its pitfalls are language and cultural barrier, and the risk involved. The role of the researcher in the study was that of:

- Ethnographer: the researcher has access to information within the population (inquiry from the inside)
- Historian: the researcher survey things around him (inquiry from outside)

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION: TRENDS AND PATTERN

This section of the paper discusses the trend and pattern of migration. That is the size of migration, types of immigration, settlement of migrants and return of migrants.

Size of immigration

The number of immigrants in Kassel as of February 2016 stood at 28, 000 excluding migrants holding the German passports, this figure was obtained from the city administrative headquarters during the election of foreigners into positions of those who will act as a link between the foreigner's community and the city council. The election was conducted by the city council in order to have foreigners protecting the interest of immigrants. There also undocumented migrants living in Kassel who refuse to register at the city council for reason best known to them. The data for migrants holding German passports was not available at the time of this study. Among the migrants that dominate Kassel are the Turkish, the African community, Eastern Europeans, and Syrians.

Migration types

There are different types of migration types in Germany which is also applicable to Kassel. The most common types of migration to Kassel will be discussed below.

Student migrants

Germany is one country among others that international students have been patronizing. The free tuition fee for both domestic and international students has made Germany international destination for foreign students after the United States and the United Kingdom. It is possible to study and work in Germany. Kassel has a reputable university known as the University of Kassel, it has four campuses spread across the city. Most of the students in the university come from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Cameroon and Ghana. There are also students coming from Eastern Europe countries, Russia, Ukraine, Turkey and Latin America. Also, foreign students dominate German language schools in Kassel.

Refugees

In 2015-2016 over one million refugees entered Germany mostly from Syria. Before then, refugees from Somalia, Eritrea and some other countries such as Afghanistan with armed conflicts were admitted into Germany. Kassel is home to most of the refugees from Syria, Somalia, Eritrea and they constitute the population of foreign migrants in Kassel.

Husbands and Wives

Marriages have been one of the primary sources of immigration to Kassel. Naturalized migrants especially the males who got married to German women and after divorce, most males decided to marry the women from their home countries and these women and their children are brought to Germany through family reunion. In Kassel, African men are known for bringing their wives and children after their separation from their German spouses. There are also German men from Kassel who got married to women from Africa, Asia and Latin America. And well as German women getting married to foreign men.

Migrants eligible for employment in their own right

The is provision for foreign graduate students who have graduated from the University of Kassel to be given 18-month visa extension in order to search for employment in their chosen fields. Those who got employed within this period are granted a work permit by the foreign office. On the contrary, those who failed to get jobs are advised to leave the country after the expiration of their 18 months job searching visa.

The Geographic origin of migrants

There is a great disparity in the geographic origin of migrant to Kassel. In the course of this study, the following nationals were noticed to be migrants in Kassel (Table 1).

Table 1: Geographical Origin of Migrants in Kassel

Africa	Americas	Asia	Eastern Europe	Middle East
Algeria	Brazil	Afghanistan	Albania	Iran
Angola	Colombia	Bangladesh	Bulgaria	Iraq
Cameroon	United States	India	Croatia	Israel
Cote d' Ivoire		Indonesia	Hungary	Lebanon
Gambia		Pakistan	Latvia	Saudi Arabia
Ghana		Japan	Macedonia	Syria
Eritrea		South Korea	Romania	
Ethiopia			Russia	
Morocco			Poland	
Nigeria			Turkey	
Senegal			Ukraine	
Somalia				
Tunisia				
Western Sahara				
Zimbabwe				

Settlement of migrants

Studies of the residential patterns of immigrants in Kassel are very scanty. However, from the observation of the study shows that immigrant groups are distinct from the wider population in their geographical concentration, furthermore, these patterns of settlements have been established for a very long time.

Figure 3: Map of Kassel



Source: City Council, Kassel, 2010

The Turkish, Bulgarian and the Romanian populations dominate the Nord-Holland district of Kassel prior to the arrival of the Somali refugees. The Somali population has also joined the inhabitants of the Nord-Holland. There also other immigrant populations that are residing in the Nord-Holland such as the African community, Syrians and Eastern Europe population.

The Oberzwehren district which is a former agricultural village was an area that allowed the settlement of relatively large immigrant populations. The high rise estate Brückenhof is a multicultural character in nature due to the fact the estate is dominated by foreigners since the 1960s. For instance, the large population of the Afghans in Kassel is concentrated in the Brückenhof estate. There are implications of settlement pattern in Kassel, however, this study is not interested in dwelling on these implications.

Return of migrants

There is a dearth of data among emigrants from Kassel, however, the rate of return differ between different immigrant groups. The most common migrants are students who have come to study in Kassel, while some foreign students who have finished their studies choose to remain in Kassel, others return to their country of origin. The Center for International Migration (CIM) in Germany has a programme called the “returning experts” this programme is meant for foreign students in Germany who after the completion of their study can choose to return to the home country in order to use their knowledge gained (social remittance) for the development of the country. CIM supports those foreign students who are returning home and this has been motivating many foreign students to return home from Kassel after study.

There also immigrants that decide to return to their country of origin after staying and working for a very long time in Kassel. This group of immigrants has their pension being paid to them through the transfer of their pension due to their personal banks in their countries. One unique thing about these returned emigrants is either their children choose to return with them or they stay back in Kassel. For instance, a Nigerian retiree who is married to a German woman returned to Nigeria and the two children have to join their father in Nigeria. In another case, a Qatari man who returned to Qatar, the female child returned with her father while the male child decided to stay with his mother in Germany.

The data on migrants who after leaving Kassel to their country of origin decided to return to the city are very crude. However, evidence has shown that some migrants that left Kassel have returned to the city and living happily with their family. A case in point is a Nigerian and a Cameroonian. While the former after spending 19 years in Kassel, relocated to Nigeria for five years and later returned to Kassel in 2012. The latter returned to Cameroon after graduating

from the University of Kassel, with just one week for his 18-month German visa to expire, he returned to Kassel.

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION IN KASSEL

Immigration has consequences for both the receiving and sending countries. The contribution of migrant workers to the host city has inadequately been researched. Consequently, it is more challenging to articulate a compressive argument on the impact of immigration on the host city. However, there is empirical evidence to prove the economic benefits of immigration to the host city.

Impact of Immigration on Tax, Pension and the Welfare system

The contribution of immigrants to the pension, tax and welfare system in Kassel cannot be overemphasized. The fear of immigrants of adversely affecting the economic welfare of their host city has been disproved by empirical literature. However, Kohlmeier and Schimany (2005) note that immigrants are often considered as a burden for the public finance as they purportedly pay less tax and contribution. On the contrary, they get more economic benefits.

There are many immigrants in Kassel that are working with many organizations in the city, such organizations include Volkswagen, Mercedes-Benz, and BMW. They are certain jobs that the natives are unwilling to do in most factories, it is the migrant workers that do such jobs. For instance, in Edeka, DHL, GLS, TI Automotive and Huya you find immigrants as the dominating workers along the production lines. Every worker working in all these organizations pays tax, pension and they contribute to the welfare system in Kassel. One unique aspect of the worker's contribution to the tax, pension and welfare system as that their contributions are deducted automatically from their salaries (Pay as You Earn). Empirical studies have shown that immigrants' contribution to tax, pen and welfare system impact the economy of their host nations. (See Lolonde and Topel, 1997; Smith and Edmonson 1997; Gott and Johnson, 2002).

Impact of immigration on export

Germany is one of the best exporting countries in Europe and immigrants in Germany have used this opportunity to be exporting goods to their home countries. For instance, in Kassel, there are many foreigners from Africa and Asia, most of them do send goods home (non-financial remittances. Goods there are normally exported my immigrants in Kassel include electronics, appliances, automobiles, and second clothes. Recent studies have investigated the link between immigration and foreign trade and the outcome of the studies confirm a positive correlation between international migration and the export of goods to immigrants' home

countries. For details on this (see Gould 1994; Dunlevy and Hutchinson 1990; Head and Ries 1997; Girma and Yu, 2002).

Impact of immigration on different sectors of the economy

The economy of Kassel is diversified which make the city not to be dependent on one sector of the economy of the city. The most prominent sectors in the city are automobiles, manufacturing, construction, service, tertiary and the logistic. The cleaning and catering sectors are also booming. Many immigrants in Kassel have employed all these sectors, while high-skilled immigrants work in the tertiary and service sectors, the low-skilled immigrants work in the logistics, construction, manufacturing and automotive sectors. There also low-skilled immigrants with high university qualification working in the cleaning sector because of the lack of job in their professional fields.

Migrant entrepreneurship

Immigrants are not just there to look for jobs to survive, but most of them have established their businesses, thereby creating jobs for themselves, other foreigners alike and the natives. In Kassel, a lot of immigrants have their own business ranging from mini supermarkets, auto shops, copy shops, restaurants, computer shops and shops for seconded goods. These business outfits are mostly suited in the city center where they can attract customers. Those who patronized these business outfits are foreigners and the natives. Self-employed immigrants have established business outfits all over Western Europe and shaped the cosmopolitan façade of many industrialized economies (Kloostermann and Rath, 2003). Furthermore, these immigrants entrepreneurship provide socioeconomic benefits for themselves, other foreigners and as well as the natives (Kohlmeier and Schimany, 2005). One unique aspect of migrant entrepreneurship is that they act as subsidiaries to native entrepreneurship as they may concentrate more on activities where they have particular comparative advantages (The Economist, 2002).

Earning and saving of Immigrants

All immigrants working in Kassel earn and save money in most of the banks in Kassel, such as the Commerzbank, Tango, Kasseler, Postbank, and Deutsche bank. The money they save gives these banks the opportunity to give out loans to those that qualified for these loans. Evidence has shown that saving spur investment. The setting up of new buildings and business outfits in Kassel and environs shows that these banks are responsible for giving out loans to the owners of these outfits.

Highly qualified immigrants

The University of Kassel has produced a lot of highly qualified immigrants to the Kassel labour market as well as other parts of Germany. There are many graduates of the university working in different sectors of the Kassel economy. Also, there are highly qualified immigrants that migrated to Kassel to work. For instance, there are Nigerian, Ghanaian and Cameroonian doctors practicing in Kassel as well as doctors from Turkey who operate their own clinics in Kassel. The immigration of highly qualified immigrants has been appraising as accelerating the dynamics of economic growth (Romer, 1986, 1987, and 1990; Lucas, 1988), This, according to the “new growth theory”, “a cumulative human capital produces positive knowledge externalities that spill over the economy in which they occur and, thus countries which have high level of human capital grow more quickly (Straubhaar, 2000). Further to this, the positive externalities linked with skilled migration exceed the economics of market price, factors of production, and are replicated more in increased technologies and entrepreneurship network in, and among the sending and host countries (Saxenian, 2002).

Immigrants as consumers

Immigrants are the major consumers in most shops in the city central of Kassel. From the observation of this study, immigrants patronize “flowmarket”, big shops such as C & A, Mullar, Rossman and H & M. Furthermore, the big supermarkets such Rewe, Edeka, Aldi, Penny, Lidl and Telgut have most of their customers as foreigners. Even the mini supermarkets being operated by foreigners are dominated by foreign consumers. The Asian and African shops have most of their customers from Asia and African immigrants.

Employment

The debate on whether immigration causes unemployment among the natives continues to spiral. However, immigration has helped in improving labour market efficiency in Kassel. Among the job agencies in Kassel such as Acio, Per-Tempus, Manpower and Agentur fur Arbeit have most of their employed staff as foreigners. Evidence from some advanced countries shows migrant workers supplement nationals in the labour market and therefore, has no native impact on native workers’ employment prospect and wages (Munz et al., 2007).

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study is to access the impact of immigration on the economy of Kassel, Germany. The results of the observation methods use for this study show that immigrants have an economic impact on Kassel. However, the outcome of the study cannot be generalized in the

analytical term. Further studies are required in the areas of demographic, social and cultural and the political impact of migrants in the host city, as well as further research on the questions of immigration and economic growth. Empirical evidence has shown that immigration has a positive impact on the economy of the host country, however, the magnitude of the impact is still in a contentious issue.

Immigrant workers contribute to the economic growth in various ways through the filling of labour market needs both in skilled and unskilled employment, promoting entrepreneurship and economic growth. For instance, countries with the highest concentration of immigration are among the most economically successful – Australia, Canada and the United States of America (ILO, 2010). Migration is beneficial for both the sending and receiving countries. However, the task is to administer and control migration in a way that maximizes benefits for all involved (ILO, 2010).

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The future development of Kassel will depend among other things on if the city is capable of securing a good integration of immigrants not only for residence immigrants but also those that are expected to migrate to the city in the future. One barrier that foreign graduate students face in the labor market in Kassel, is the issue of work permit. For instance, employers of labour always require foreign highly qualified employees to have a work permit visa before they can be employed, on the other hand, the immigration department wants foreign employees to secure jobs first before they can be given work permits visa. There is a conflict of interest which can be solved by the city council. The city council has been trying in the area of integration and they have engaged some non-governmental organization such as the African Peoples´ Convention in enlightening foreigners that due for German passport to see the reasons why they should acquire a German passport. This is a good program that other cities in Germany can emulate.

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