

Socio-economic Status, Internet Use and Desire to Migrate 'Abroad': Experience of Youth in an Urban Slum in Nigeria.

Background

Africa is marked by a growing youth bulge that calls for increased attention to the plight young people face and the need to take advantage of the potential demographic dividend they bring. Youth living in urban slums are one of the United Nations targeted group for human capital development. In Nigeria however, many of them are often excluded from empowerment initiatives that their peers benefit from.

Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa with a burgeoning youthful population may soon be experiencing economic prosperity if its human capital is effectively utilized. Will youth living in Nigeria urban slums be willing to relocate to America or Europe if opportune? What are the factors that will aid their quest to migrate abroad? The study sought to answer these.

Data and Method

The study utilized data obtained in July 2015 from 200 young people aged 15-35 in the slum community of Isale-Eko in Lagos, Nigeria. The Nigeria Youth policy categorise youth as people between ages 18 and 35 but the study lowered the band to 15 years to include more adolescents. The study is purposive but adopted a systematic random sampling technique where the interviewer selects the 7th youth found in the area. The study adopted a face to face approach through pen and paper interview (PAPI). Screener question on participants age were asked to ensure that participants falls within the age group before proceeding with interviews. A semi-structured questionnaire was the instrument used for eliciting responses. The interviewers were well trained and strict quality control measures were employed to ensure that quality data was collected from respondents, including the review of all completed questionnaires. Data was analysed through SPSS 16.0. Binary logistic regression model was used to test the association effect between selected variables and their desire to migrate abroad.

Result

The mean age of sampled youth was 23 years. More than half (56%) of them were males while 44 percent were females. Majority were singles (80%), Muslims (57%), had secondary education and higher (82%) employed (65%), earned less than \$100 (₦20,000) monthly (68%) and lived in a single room accommodation (44%). Two-Third (68%) indicated that their income was not sufficient to meet their needs and only 35 percent of sampled youth claimed their income was sufficient for them to save. A little above one- third (37%) believed that the Nigeria government had plans for its youth while majority (83%) expressed their desire to migrate abroad if chanced. Internet exposure is relatively high with 2 in every three youth (66%) sampled having an active email account and 58 percent having access to the internet at least once a week. The mobile phone is the main source of access to internet (61%) and only one in every five youth sampled used their personal computer and modem to surf the internet. However, less than one in every six (15%) used the internet for professional advancement and just about 3 in every 10 youth (29%) will migrate abroad for professional reasons. Result from the binary logistic regression model showed that youth's age, sex,

form of employment, perception about government plan for the youth and frequency of internet access have significant association with their desire to migrate abroad.

Result Table

Parameters	B	Wald	Degree of freedom (df)	Significance (0.05)	Exp(B) (Odd ratio)
Gender	-1.448	4.992	1	.025*	.235
Age	.337	13.623	1	.000*	1.400
Education level		8.024	4	.091	
Education level(1)	4.446	4.501	1	.034	85.254
Education level (2)	-19.369	.000	1	.998	.000
Education level (3)	2.555	5.948	1	.015*	12.867
Education level (4)	1.592	1.723	1	.189	4.912
Form of employment		18.703	4	.001*	
Form of employment (1)	-.754	.203	1	.652	.470
Form of employment (2)	-1.567	.710	1	.400	.209
Form of employment (3)	-19.746	.000	1	.998	.000
Form of employment (4)	2.013	1.123	1	.289	7.488
Income is sufficient	-.135	.037	1	.848	.874
Saves part of income	1.311	3.729	1	.053	3.708
Duration of stay	-.102	.029	1	.865	.903
Government plans for youth		10.209	2	.006*	
Government plans for youth (1)	.173	.036	1	.849	1.189
Government plans for youth (2)	2.569	5.460	1	.019*	13.047
Frequency of internet access		12.458	5	.029*	
Frequency of internet access (1)	-1.222	1.330	1	.249	.295
Frequency of internet access (2)	-2.233	2.402	1	.121	.107
Frequency of internet access (3)	-18.575	.000	1	.999	.000
Frequency of internet access (4)	.403	.105	1	.746	1.496
Frequency of internet access (5)	1.318	1.182	1	.277	3.734
Constant	-12.272	5.998	1	.014	.000

*parameters significant at p<5%

Discussion and Policy Recommendation

Result clearly demonstrated that many of the youth sampled were experiencing financial difficulty and do not believe that the Nigerian government had plans for its youth. The high number of youth who are willing to migrate abroad clearly shows that these youth have been secluded from economic privileges and do not see themselves contributing to the country's growth potential. The rate Nigerian youth are seeking to migrate abroad mostly through illegal means have become an embracement to the reputation of the country raising question of utilization of its labour force. The multivariate analysis clearly showed that their perception about government plans for its youth exert significant influence on their quest to migrate abroad. This clearly shows an imperative for urgent intervention in form of human capital investment like entrepreneurship and skill acquisition programs and other targeted empowerment programme for youth in this locality. Engaging this youth will not only equip them to be economically productive, it will also leave them with lesser time to think about migrating abroad without genuine motives.

The emergence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) particularly the internet seems one of the greatest discoveries of the 21st century providing people with infinite information and fostering newer opportunities. Unfortunately, while a considerable number of sampled youth in the neighbourhood have access to the internet, only few are maximizing it for skill development and professional advancement, the thrust of them only used the social media aspect of the internet.

Evidence from the literature have shown that poor neighbourhood and communities with high number of economically dissatisfied youth are more susceptible to violence. On the other end, new findings have revealed that many rebel and terrorist group now recruit young people through the social media. This calls for targeted advocacies and sensitizations for youth in this locality on profitable use of ICT in order to positively benefit them and the society.

Keywords: *Youth, slum, migrate*

Note: 'Abroad' in the study context refers to North America and Europe.