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Article in *SSRN Electronic Journal* · January 2013

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Migration Prospects of Youths Employed in Nigerian Cities

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Abstract

This paper explores the challenge of youth employment in the Nigerian context with a bid to demonstrate interconnections among socio-economic characteristics and incessant youth migration. Univariate and multivariate analysis were carried out with the use of youth data (N = 1353) culled from a survey of street traders in urban centres of Nigeria. The analysis results indicate gender, employment status, marital commitments, migrant status and mode of trading as statistically significant determinants of youth migration in search of better opportunities. Owing to the non-availability of desirable jobs for the educated youths, majority seek further migration from their current business locations in search of better job opportunities: both at home and abroad. In order to reduce the incidence of skilled migration we recommend that policy emphasis be placed on vocational and entrepreneurship training. Further, given the growing incidence of urbanization, we noted the crucial need for an employment-generating macroeconomic framework.

Key words: Youth employment, street trading, cities, continuous migration

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Acknowledgement: The empirical investigation from which data for this paper was extracted, was funded by a generous research grant from the CU Centre for Research and Development, Nigeria.

Notes from Editors of Youth and Society

After review in our editorial office, we determined that your manuscript # Y&S-14-0141 entitled "Migration Prospects of Youths Employed in Nigerian Cities" which you submitted to **Youth & Society** is not the kind of manuscript we publish in the journal. Despite the unique population and relevance of the topic for our readership, the study is **largely descriptive in nature and does not include a detailed enough conceptual framework to guide the study**. Most of our empirical studies **go beyond demographic analysis of study populations**. The manuscript does not, for example, **explain why the variables included in the study are important for understanding a developmental question relevant for Nigerian street trading youth**. The manuscript might be more relevant for a **demography related journal**.

Notes from Editors of Populations studies

Thank you for submitting your paper to Population Studies, but we do not think it is suitable for the Journal. If you continue with this research, **we would advise that you consider the relevance of circular migration and the work of Aderanti Adepaju**. Also, we think much **more attention should be given to unemployment levels and trends in Nigeria**. In our view, a journal like Urbanization and Environment would be more suitable than Population Studies for a revised version of the paper.'

Migration Prospects of Youths Employed in Nigerian Cities

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Migration Prospects of Youths Employed in Nigerian Cities

Introduction

The African population has one of the fastest rates of natural increase in the world. Concomitant to this, the high preponderance of youth (15 to 24 years) is posing several challenges to the present and future existence of the continent (OECD, 2012). The average annual population growth in Africa is 2.5 per cent, Latin America remains 1.1 per cent, Oceania is about 1.7 per cent while most European countries are already at zero growth rates (UN-DESA, 2013). Considering the current rates of growth, it will take most countries in Africa less than 30 years to double their current population (UN-Habitat, 2012). The proliferation of a young population, amongst other things, necessitates increased investments in human capital development- basic schooling as well as higher levels of education. Other challenges of the ever-growing population of youth in the African region include rural-urban migration, unemployment, congestion in cities, pressure on educational facilities, economic insecurities, increased crime rates and development of shantytowns. The most visible and impacting on the social and economic environment is the challenge of unemployment among the teeming population of youth on the continent.

Developing countries have high rates of youth urban migration bursting at the seams and characterized by inequality of opportunity. Even though the prevalence of the youthful population - the most dynamic human resource of any population- is desirable in the urban environment, their productive engagement is more important to ensure the security of life and the attainment of a standard quality of life. However, due to the low labour absorption rates of developing country settings, many youths find solace in the urban informal sector as a means

of survival and livelihood (UNCTAD, 2013; Cruces, Ham and Viollaz, 2012). In most cases, this translates to the proliferation of activities such as street vending in self-constructed shacks, roving with wares on busy urban streets and all manner of informal sector engagements which exposes them to hazards such as accidents, harassment by local council cum law enforcement agents, and sexual harassment. (Ogunrinola, Fadayomi, Amoo and Sodipe, 2012)

As noted in Sodipe and Ogunrinola (2011), the high rate of labour force growth is accompanied by a low and dwindling rate of formal sector job growth in developing countries like Nigeria. This has resulted in the expansion of the informal sector, where many engage in low-wage jobs in transition with hopes to secure formal sector employments when available (Oni and Dabalén, 2000). Statistics show that Africa's share of informal employment as a percentage of non-agricultural employment increased from 40 per cent over the period 1985 to 1989 to 61 per cent over the period 2000 to 2007 (Schneider, 2012; UNCTAD, 2013). Official unemployment statistics in developing countries are grossly an underestimation of reality, as the unemployed have no incentives to report their unemployment status, since no form of social security support is provided by the government (NBS, 2010; NPC, 2009a). The increasing incidence of educated unemployment, proliferation of self-employment, part-time employment and unpaid employment in family enterprises inter alia, are indicators of the need for creative and proactive actions to mitigate the effects of unemployment and promote increased industrial activities in the domestic environment (NPC, 2009b).

The extent to which youth contribute to national output in the country and region is limited by the degree of inequality of opportunities, most evident manifestation seen in the rising

unemployment status of the youths in African countries (UNECA, 2002). The challenges and causes of unemployment in developed and developing countries differ. For instance, challenges in developing countries of Africa are frequently attributed to their underdevelopment, high rate of population growth, jobless economic growth situations in recent years, limited domestic sector, and poor quality of human capital investments and schooling education that does not equip the youth with relevant and applicable industrial skills (UNECA, 2002).

Out of about 6 million Nigerians released annually from the educational system, about 10 percent are hardly employed, leaving over 4.5 million graduates and school leavers in desperate search for unavailable jobs (NPC, 2009b). This cycle results in a blend of unemployment, under-employment, low-wage employment and social exclusion. This burden of surplus labour existing in tandem with paucity of skills and the resultant skill mismatch aggravates the Nigerian unemployment situation. This paper explores the challenge of youth employment in the Nigerian context with a bid to demonstrate interconnections among socio-economic characteristics and incessant youth migration in developing countries.

Literature review

The increasing youth bulge places a huge demand on schooling facilities at all levels for human capital development and subsequently for employment opportunities in the labour market (UN-Habitat, 2012). For a middle income developing country like Nigeria, the challenge is that the majority of educated youth are unemployed, or underemployed. As a result, about 72 per cent of the youths in Africa are reported to live on less than US\$2 per day, indicating a high incidence of poverty and low quality of life. This is a huge challenge for economic

sustainability as youths are said to be the future of tomorrow in all human societies. Overall, the concern is either improvement in the quality of labour (that is, decent work sense and requirements) or increase in the quantity of available jobs for the youth (OECD, 2012).

Although, most developing economies are characterised by low labour absorption capacities, the insufficient investment and the teeming nature of the population seems unmatchable. This informs amongst other things why governments seek to promote foreign direct investment (and put in place local content specifications) as a tool for employment generation in addition to domestic investment (UNCTAD, 2013; NPC, 2009b). While domestic private investments cater for most of the employment in developing countries, this is not adequate to absorb the teeming group of educated youths. This has resulted in the development of the informal sector of developing countries. Even though informal sector employment opportunities are not sources of decent employment, they have become an overwhelming norm in developing countries.

Noting the vibrancy of the urban informal sector and rural sectors as creators of jobs for the unemployed youth, it is the prerogative of government and its institutions to seek ways to improve and encourage focused development of the urban informal sector to chart a path for better livelihood and increase its potentials to become engines for decent job creation (Bhowmik, 2006; UNCTAD, 2013; UNECA, 2011). It is well documented in the literature that finance is one of the most crucial challenges of start ups; this has led to the institutional strengthening of small scale banking services- microfinance institutions to promote enterprise development in the country. Notwithstanding, the urban streets of Nigeria bustle with the

unflinching activities of street traders across diverse age groups who carry on daily activities in spite of harassments and health risks posed by their activities. (Amoo, Ola-David, Ogunrinola, and Fadayomi, 2012);

Even though there have been several programmes to create jobs in the economy, these have not proved sufficient to cater for the overwhelming population requiring employment in the economy. The supply of labour far outweighs the supply of labour. Thus informal street trading accounts for majority of jobs in sub Saharan Africa (OECD, 2012). The proliferation of street trading is not without its many shortcomings. This is because the traders are illegal street vendors who have no right to the public spaces they occupy to work and as such are objects of frequent harassment by city council officials, traffic policemen, task force members as well as shop owners and whole sale traders in the environment. In some cities, street traders organise in order to overcome some of the harassment issues they faced with and they curtail their activities in such ways that they contribute positively to urban planning and development. In such cases, organised street traders have built good rapport with city council authorities, solicited for conducive infrastructure for their trade as well as obtain operation licenses which make them less vulnerable to official disturbance and they can trade in peace and tranquillity (Bhowmik, 2006; OECD, 2012).

The urban labour market experiences a continual inflow of labour both from internal growth and also from the surrounding towns and villages. Given the low absorption of the formal wage sub-sector of the urban labour market, migrants who are unable to secure formal wage employment seek engagement in the urban informal sector. In this respect, there are divergent

perspectives with respect to the impact of internal migration in the literature and their supporting policy imperatives (Deshingkar, Sward and Estruch-Puertas, 2012). On one hand, youth migration in a positive sense is an observed poverty reduction strategy. In this way migrants are encouraged to move from areas of low economic opportunities to other more economically beneficial settings. Policies in support of migration in this sense include advocacy for migrant rights. On the other hand is the perspective that highlights the negative effects of migration, such as: its effects on urban population, distortion of the urban economy, proliferation of child labour, health-related implications and the propensity of migration to generate socio-political tension.

Methods

In addressing the challenge of youths in street trading, in this present study, we utilize the United Nations definition of youth as those within 15 – 24 years age category. This study examines the profile of youth in street trading and their job cum migration prospects. The data used for the study was obtained from a national survey of street traders in major cities of Nigeria. Survey respondents were street traders in the Northern, Eastern and Western parts of Nigeria who were directly interviewed with the use of well structured questionnaires (while other information are gotten by direct observation). The four major cities selected purposively for the study are Lagos, representing the West, Aba and Port-Harcourt for the East and Kano to represent the North. Target population for this present study consist of youths within the age group 15- 24 years (n=1343) who are involved in street trading. The survey respondents were of two categories – sedentary vendors stationary in open or semi-open public spaces who exhibit their merchandise on wooden structures or rubber mats; and itinerant vendors who rove

bearing their wares on their heads, hands or in push-carts seeking patronage from pedestrians and commuters in busy urban streets.

Some univariate analyses were carried out on the socio-demographic profile of the survey respondents. This is presented in Table 1 and discussed. A model was also specified to test the hypothesis that the socio-economic characteristics of youth street traders have no significant influence on prospects for further migration. The estimation was carried out with the use of a binary logistic regression specified as follows:

$$\text{Logit}(Y) = \ln \frac{\pi}{1 - \pi} = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_n X_n$$

Where π is the probability of further migration, α is the Y intercept, β s are the logistic regression coefficients of the predictor variables, Xs are the set of explanatory variables. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

Results and Discussion

Socio-demographic profile of the respondents

The socio-demographic profile of youths in street trading activities as well as the nature of their street trading activities are presented in Table 1. Over one quarter of the youths involved in street trading activities are teens in the 15-19 age category, while the older youths in the 20-24 age group are about 72 per cent of the total population of youths captured in the Street Trading Survey. Only about 8 per cent of the youth street traders have no form of schooling experience, indicating that most of the youth in street trading have gone through some form of educational learning experience- which accounts for the considerable literacy rates among street traders. While 16.4 per cent of the youth had only primary school certification, 51.5 per

cent of the youth street traders had secondary school level education. Youths with tertiary level of education were 24.3 per cent indicating a high level of educated unemployment experience amongst graduates of tertiary institutions. (See speculations in Oladeji, 1987, 1994)

The products peddled for sale by the street traders were of different forms but were axially recoded into nine categories. It is evident that a larger percentage of youths trade in food and beverage items (which accounts for about 67.2 per cent of goods traded), youths peddling household items and wears accounted for 16.6 per cent, while trade in telephone and other electronic items account for 16.3 per cent of street trading activities among youths in the various study locations. Over 90 per cent of the youth street traders have never been married nor have had children at the time of the Survey; only about 7 per cent of the youth street traders have been married and birthed children. With respect to religious inclinations, the traders were mostly Christian (accounting for 62.4 percent) and Islamists (37.2 per cent of street traders).

This study identified different categories of youths involved in street trading, for example those who are involved as a means of supporting household income, those who are involved as a transitional occupation in the hope of gaining better employment opportunity in the organised private sector. The results indicate more participation of male youths (60.1 per cent) than female youths who were 39.9 percent of the youth street traders. On the nature of employment 77.4 per cent of the youths were self-employed with only 11.2 per cent as employees while others including unpaid family workers in the business constitute about 11.3 percent of the youths in street trading.

Street vending takes on different forms. About 66.6 per cent of the active youths are peddlers of wares without a shop, 31.7 per cent are sedentary in open public spaces, with a minimal 1.7 per cent being sedentary traders in lock up/make shift shops. Present worth of the business for most (85.9 per cent) of the street traders at the time of the survey was less than 20000 Nigerian Naira (< US\$123). About 47.1 per cent of the youth street traders have experienced some form of harassment from local government officials, police men wanting to extort money from them. The harassment take forms of confiscation of goods, arrest and bails, by respective government officials who seek enforce the rules and discipline street traders for illegal making use of public spaces.

Only a small percentage (15.6 per cent) of the youth in street trading has never acquired a skill at some point in their life. Skills that have been acquired by youth involved in street trading include experience gathered from previous involvement in trading activities, computer related skills, Others include skills related to carpentry/masonry, welding and metal fabrication, catering, tailoring/fashion designing, health care services, driving and vehicle repairs, hairdressing, soap making amongst other things. We gathered from the survey why youths in street trading are so engaged. The most common reasons are as follows: lack of a better job option (mostly because of their low level of education; their preference for self employment; inability to secure new employment after losing former job), and as an activity engaged in to raise funds for a more desirable business venture and pay the rent for their own stall where they can trade in safety with minimal harassment from officials preventing illegal use of public space for street trading. Other youths are involved in street trading to support a family member.

Some youths also take it as an occupation-in- transition for want of being idle while waiting to secure admission into a desirable tertiary institution.

There are myriad challenges faced by youths in street trading in the course of doing business and seeking means of daily sustenance. Some highlights of these challenges are: low sales, low income, keen competition, job stress, many violation tickets issued by local council officials, official and tout disturbances, lack of storage facilities and sexual harassment. The threats youth street traders face on the job are mostly related to official harassment from local council officials, police personnel, as well as disturbance from touts (this accounts for about 25.5 per cent of the problems youths in street trading face on the job. Another common challenge is that of financing the business as a result of low sales volume since several competitors peddling similar products ply the same axis for the business. High job stress, accident proneness and lack of storage facilities for their wares after the close of business are other challenges being faced by youths in street trading.

Binary logistic regression showing relationship between selected socio-economic characteristics of youth street traders and susceptibility to further migration

In order to appraise the statistical significance of the univariate analysis results reported in Table 1 above, a binary logistic model was formulated to identify the socio-economic characteristics that account for the propensity for continued migration among youths in street trading in Nigeria. The dependent variable for the regression is the susceptibility of respondents to further migration which is captured in binary form (0, 1) where 1 represents youth street trader planning to further migrate from present location for better prospects; and

zero otherwise. The explanatory variables include gender, employment status, skill status, migrant status, future career orientation, educational attainment, marital status, mode of trading, welfare status and prior migration experience of youth street traders.

In what follows we present the estimation results of the binary logistic regression of socio-economic and welfare conditions on the susceptibility to further migration among youths in street trading who were respondents in the Survey. Male youths in the 15-24 years age category are 1.554 more likely to further migrate to other places than their female counterparts as shown in Table 2 below. Further, youths in street trading who are self-employed are less likely to seek further migration as a career prospect, with the odds ratio being about 0.617. Youth street traders who are employees are 0.147 less likely to seek further migration than other street traders. Youth traders who have acquired some skills prior to their engagement in street trading are 0.394 times less likely to further migrate than those without prior skill training in the reference category. Natives of the location where their trading activities are taking place as well as who are migrants status are less likely to seek further migration. Specifically, youths street traders who are natives in their business location are 0.157 times less likely to seek to migrate to another location in search of economic opportunities.

With respect to the level of educational attainment, youths with primary and secondary education were found to be 0.598 and 0.689 less likely to seek to relocate than folks with no measure of formal education. On the other hand, youths with tertiary level education were observed to be 1.334 times more likely to seek further migration; since they are more probable

of securing better job prospects at home and abroad than those with little or no form of formal education attainment.

Youths in street trading who have ever migrated were found to be 0.804 less likely to migrate than those who have never migrated. Most migration is in the hope of improved welfare conditions. Respondents were asked to compare their current welfare status to their previous status, judging whether they were better off or worse off. Street traders whose present welfare condition is better off than their initial condition in their previous employment and/or location are 0.633 times less likely to migrate than those whose conditions are not better off. In addition, we noted from the results of the binary logistic regression analysis that sedentary youths in street trading are more likely to seek to migrate than traders that peddle their wares. Also worthy of mention is the influence of career orientation moves on the propensity for further migration. Youth street traders seeking alternative job opportunities are 1.017 more likely to seek further migration than those with other career prospects orientation.

Concluding Comments

This paper examines the challenges of youth employment in the Nigerian context with a bid to demonstrate interconnections among socio-economic characteristics and incessant youth migration in developing countries. The study findings show that gender, employment status, migrant status, marital status and the nature of trading significantly influence continued migration among youth street traders in Nigeria. Owing to the non-availability of jobs for the educated youths, majority of them seek further migration from their current business locations in search of better job opportunities: both at home and abroad. In order to reduce the incidence

of skilled migration, policy emphasis should be placed on vocational and entrepreneurship training. In this way youths will be empowered to be able to compete for jobs in the urban labour market. This will also help them to desist from further migration and from being recruited into insurgency groups.

In as much as the government recognizes the largeness of the informal sector of the economy, and understands the need for aggressive policies targeted at transforming the informal economy, the focus should be on skill acquisition for the youths in order to enhance their productivity and opportunities for self-employment in the informal sector.

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Table 1: Socio-Demographic Profile and Trading activities of Youth Street Traders

Gender	No	%	Age Group	No	%
Male	807	60.1	15-19 years	364	27.1
Female	536	39.9	20-24 years	979	72.9
Total	1343	100.0	Total	1343	100.0
Marital Status			Product Sold		
Single	1244	92.6	Snacks (cake, gala, plantain chips etc)	431	32.1
Married	98	7.3	Cold drinks/ juices/ice cream	74	5.5
Separated/Divorced/Widowed	1	.1	Clothing, Assorted Wears/ jewelleryes	154	11.5
Total	1343	100.0	Bread and Confectioneries	119	8.9
Children Ever Born (CEB)			Fresh Fruits/Vegetables	154	11.5
Zero parity	1271	94.6	Cooked Foods/Drinks	124	9.2
1-2	50	3.8	Phones/Phone calls/computer parts	167	12.4
3-4	21	1.6	Home utensils/appliances	68	5.1
5	1	.1	Others (News vendor, lubricant)	52	3.9
Total	1343	100.0	Total	1343	100.0
Type of Accomodation			Employment status		
Self-Contained Flat	72	5.4	Self-employed	1040	77.4
Room and Parlour	296	22.0	Employees	151	11.2
One Room Appartment	693	51.6	Others	152	11.3
Wood/iron House	84	6.3	Total	1343	100.0
Grass/Mud House	150	11.2	Mode of Trading		
Shift/Transit Accommodation	27	2.0	Sedentary in open public spaces	426	31.7
Others	5	.4	Sedentary in make-shift shop	18	1.3
No Response	16	1.2	sedentary near lock-up shop	5	.4
Total	1343	100.0	Peddling on street without a shop	894	66.6
Educational Attainment			Total	1343	100.0
No Schooling	106	7.9	Skill Acquisition		
Primary Education	220	16.4	Ever learnt a skill	1133	84.4
Secondary Education	691	51.5	Did not learn a skill	210	15.6
Post-Secondary Education	326	24.3	Total	1343	100.0
Total	1343	100.0	Experience with Harassment		
Ever Migrated			Harassed	632	47.1
1980-1999	56	4.2	Never Experienced Harrassment	711	52.9
2000 and beyond	389	29.0	Total	1343	100.0
Not Applicable/No Response	898	66.9	Initial Capital		
Total	1343	100.0	Less than N20,000	1190	88.6
Welfare Condition			N20,000-49,999	38	2.8
Better-Off	999	74.4	N50,000 and above	7	.5
Worse-Off	344	25.6	No Response	108	8.0
Total	1343	100.0	Total	1343	100.0
Reason for street trading			Present Worth of Business		
Preference for self employment	452	33.7	Less than N20,000	1154	85.9
Yet to secure desired job	277	20.6	N20,000-49,999	68	5.1
No other job after losing former	37	2.8	N50,000 and above	11	.8
To get money for other biz	437	32.5	No Response	110	8.2
Others reasons	118	8.8	Total	1343	100.0
No Response	22	1.6			
Total	1343	100.0			

Source: Street Trading Survey, 2010

Table 2: Binary Logistic Regression showing socio-economic profile of youth street traders and further migration

Selected Variables	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Odds Ratio
Gender						
Female	RC					
Male	0.441	0.257	2.942	1	0.086	1.554
Employment Status						
Others	RC					
Self Employed	-0.482	0.418	1.332	1	0.249	0.617
Employee	-1.92	0.547	12.308	1	0.000	0.147
Skill Acquisition						
No skill acquired	RC					
Acquired a skill	-0.931	0.303	9.419	1	0.002	0.394
Migrant Status						
Others	RC					
Natives	-1.853	0.743	6.215	1	0.013	0.157
Migrant	-0.672	0.589	1.3	1	0.254	0.511
Career orientation						
Other Options	RC					
Looking for another job	0.016	0.244	0.005	1	0.946	1.017
Educational Status						
No schooling	RC					
Primary Education	-0.514	0.445	1.336	1	0.248	0.598
Secondary Education	-0.372	0.38	0.963	1	0.326	0.689
Post-Secondary Education	0.288	0.401	0.518	1	0.472	1.334
Marital Status						
Married	RC					
Single	-0.608	0.358	2.887	1	0.089	0.544
Mode of Trading						
Peddlers	RC					
Sedentary	1.013	0.257	15.488	1	0.000	2.753
Welfare Status						
Not Better off	RC					
Better off	-0.458	0.452	1.027	1	0.311	0.633
Prior Migration						
Never Migrated	RC					
Ever migrated	-0.218	0.362	0.365	1	0.546	0.804
Constant	4.159	1.262	10.86	1	0.001	63.999
Overall Percentage = 70.8 %			Cox & Snell R Square = 0.147			RC: Reference Category
-2 Log likelihood = 449.971			Nagelkerke R Square = 0.207			

Source: Street Trading Survey, 2010