

Dynamics of Wage prestige and Implications on Rural-urban Migration in Nsukka Area of Nigeria

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Abstract: Rural-urban migration is an aspect of internal migration. Humans are known to have migrated extensively throughout prehistory and human history and the movement of people in modern times has remarkably continued under various forms. This paper examines wage prestige as a factor influencing rural-urban migration in rural communities in Nsukka, Enugu state, Nigeria using a total of 40 (25 males and 15 females) eligible participants from 30 years and above. The study adapted purposive and snowball sampling techniques with in-depth interview as the method of data collection. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the elicited data. Result showed that many migrants were averse to self-employment. It was found that most rural migrants majorly seek salaried work that guarantees job security. Among other findings, the study found a correlation between education and migration. The study findings therefore highlight how the dislike for self-employment has increased the prestige attached to wage labour and the attendant implication on rural-urban migration. It heralds the need for urgent government intervention in rural areas.

Keywords: wage prestige, rural-urban, migration, unemployment, self-employment, aversion.

I. INTRODUCTION

The connectedness between migration and economic advancement of individuals has continued to attract the attentions of researchers across the globe. Migration follows a number of patterns on space dimension which include urban-urban; urban-rural; rural-rural and rural-urban (Eze, 2016). According to Amrevurayire & Ojeh (2016), migration affects people with economic, social, educational and demographic peculiarities. Farrell (2017) noted that human migration from rural to urban settlements is a widespread phenomenon in developing countries. The act of rural dwellers leaving the traditional agricultural sector in order to enhance their economic activities to be able to meet their livelihood needs in urban areas is an important part of the development process in developing countries (Umar et al., 2018). Ango et al. (2014) however stressed that migration as a global phenomenon is caused not only by economic factors, but many other factors such as cultural, social, environmental, political, health among others. Aworemi et al. (2011) identified three categories of factors that are perceived as responsible for rural-urban migration which include those related to the need for education and acquisition of skills in various vocations; those related to the lack of desirable job opportunities in rural areas and finally; those factors relating to social, such as inadequate amenities.

Rural-urban migration is an aspect of internal migration. People migrate for many different reasons. As

developing economies shift from the agricultural sector to the manufacturing and industrial sectors, rural dwellers moved to urban centres (Umar et al., 2018). The emergent of industrial areas and urban centres lead to mass movement of people from the rural areas to the urban areas in search of wage labour-employment as an employee for a specified weekly wage or monthly salary, normally on terms and conditions determined by the employer, whose offer may be constrained by employment law (Scott & Marshall, 2005). This, in the view of Marx (1867/1967) as cited in Ritzer (2011) means that the employee is willing to sell his labour power in return for a specified wage. Marx sees wage as a price paid for labour power not for labour. Writing from Marxist perspectives, Castles and Kosack (2008) argued that people migrate from rural to urban areas as a result of the capitalist economic system. The urban centre has exploited the rural areas, causing their underdevelopment from the colonial period onwards. The rural areas were used as a source of cheap, easily exploited labour and cheap raw materials. They therefore, conclude that capitalism brought with itself wage labours which subsequently lead to a rise in rural-urban migration. Furthermore, Nguyen et al. (2015) and Tan, (2015) stressed that 21st century brought with itself rapid industrialization which by no small measure put a lot of burden on the cities, as this triggered the movement of people from their native places to the urban cities due to the several unpredictable events threatening their livelihoods in rural areas.

The inability of available opportunities within the immediate environment of man to satisfy his unlimited economic, social, cultural and physical expectations at a given point in time has often been behind man's desire to move to other places (Boniface, 2001). Mukhtar et al. (2018) noted that urban migration unlocks new employment opportunities for rural dwellers in a productive manner. The study further showed that migration decisions depend on positive urban-rural wage differences, education and employment opportunities among other things in the rural areas. Bundervoet (2018) on the other hand, argued that education drives migration. The study found that younger and better-educated rural dwellers are more likely to migrate compared to older or less-educated villagers. In relation to this, the United Nations (UN, 2013) document that despite the lack of reliable data on internal migration in Nigeria, it's assumed that 40% of the migrants come from the rural areas and many of them are youth with high propensity to migrate. This adds credence to an earlier study by Easton-Brooks and Daris (2007) which postulates that recent trend has shown that people migrate from

rural areas to the urban centres as a result of “wage prestige”. That is, prestige attached to an occupation measured in terms of socio-economic rewards.

Some studies have been conducted in the area of rural-urban migration in Nigeria (Ajero & Onokala, 2013; Olaniyan 2013; Aromolaran, 2013; Amrevurayire & Ojeh, 2016). Some of these studies have looked at the causes of rural-urban migration from perspectives such as poverty, inadequate healthcare facilities, retarded environment, etc (e.g., Eze, 2016 & Adewale, 2005). In their book titled “Age of Migration”, Castle and Mark (2009) however noted that there have been fundamental economic and social changes that have helped to increase rural-urban migration. Therefore, this current study is a paradigm shift from the focus of these earlier studies. It assesses how the dynamics of wage prestige has fanned aversion to self-employment and its resultant impact on rural-urban migration. Nsukka is chosen as the study area because of the perceived high rate of rural urban migration in the area in recent years. A casual observation showed that most youth in this area have tendencies of drifting to the urban areas in search of jobs. The result of the study will broaden awareness and knowledge of the interplay between wage and rural-urban migration. It will equally be useful to government and policy makers to determine the needs and ways of introducing policies and projects that will improve the rural areas and reduce rural-urban migration in rural communities in Nigeria and Sub-Saharan Africa where rural-urban migration is still high.

Theoretical Orientation

This study adopted the Harris-Todaros Model of migration as its framework. The model was proposed by John R. Harris and Michael Todaro in (1970). The major assumptions of this model are that migrants’ reactions mainly to economic incentives, earnings differentials, and the probability of getting a job at the destination have impact on the decision to migrate. Intrinsic in the assumptions therefore, is that rural-urban migration will occur if the expected urban wage exceeds the rural wage.

There are studies linking the Harris-Todaro’s model with rural-urban migration world over (e.g., Andrey, 2007; Bahns, 2005; Aquino et al., 2006; Lee, 2008; Chauduri, 2008; & Christesen, 1994). As an example, Christiansen (1994) using the Harris-Todaro’s model as a fundamental basis on which to analyse and understand rural-urban migration in Durban, South Africa, found that migration to and within the informal settlements of Durban is a process whereby individuals migrate in the hope of securing a high-paying formal urban employment. In accordance with the underlying principles of the Harris-Todaro’s model, it is argued that the underlying impetus behind the migrant’s decision to move is a comparison of income levels at the area of origin with that at the intended destination. Aquino et al. (2006) have equally used the model to study the transitional dynamics of rural-urban migration in Brazil. The study observed a transitional dynamic with continuous growth of the urban fraction of overall population toward equilibrium. An equilibrium, which they suggest, is

characterized by stabilization of rural-urban expected wages differential. For this model, the decision to migrate is based largely on rational economic calculations by the potential migrant where migration is argued to proceed in response to rural-urban differences in expected rather than actual earnings. Therefore, this study investigates how the key constructs of Harris-Todaro’s model can explain rural-urban migration in relation to wage prestige.

II. METHODS

Study design and area

Qualitative research design was adopted for the study. In-depth interviews were conducted with migrants who returned home for the yearly Christmas celebration. Esterberg (2002) noted that qualitative methods of study are well adapted to identifying attitudes of subjects and the explanations for their behaviours. The study was conducted in Nsukka area of Nigeria. The area is located in Enugu state (South Eastern Nigeria) which is an Igbo speaking society. With an annual growth rate of 2.3% as supplied by National Population Commission [NPC], the 2016 population of Nsukka LGA was put at 316,922 persons with 152,754 males and 164,167 females. The choice of Nsukka for the study was because of the perceived high rate of rural-urban migration in the area in recent years.

Participants Recruitment

Sample population comprised males (25) and females (15) from 30 years and above. To be eligible for inclusion, participants were expected to have met the following criteria: (i) must be a migrant who returned for Christmas celebration (December, 2019). (ii) Must be at least 30 years of age and (iii) must be a native of any of the rural communities in Nsukka local government area. The major communities that make up Nsukka Local Government Areas are Ede-Oballa, Edem-Ani, Ehalumona, Ibagwa-Ani, Alor, Obimo, Lejja, Okpuje, Obukpa, Opi and Okutu.

Interview participants were selected using purposive sampling procedure. In doing this, prospective participants were approached at their various homes. Participants who showed interest were screened for eligibility and were selected as part of the study sample. However, because it was difficult to identify all those who had migrated but returned home due to Christmas celebration, snowballing sampling technique was adapted. This was by asking the already selected participants to refer us to other members of their community who have similar attributes whom they felt might show interest in the study. Accordingly, new and willing participants were identified and selected until the required sample size was met. In all 40 (25 males and 15 females) eligible participants were selected.

Data Collection

Individual, in-depth interviews (IDI) were conducted in person using an unstructured interview guide. Verbal consents were obtained from the interviewees before the commencement of the IDI sessions. The IDI guide covered issues on participants’ knowledge and experiences about rural-

urban migration. Questions were asked in no particular order. The guide focused specifically on participants' general knowledge about causes of rural-urban migration. To elicit data on study specific objectives, the guide attempts to understand why participants decided to move to the urban area, circumstances surrounding the decision to migrate as well as choice of occupation and what informed such choice of occupation. While encouraging participants to support their answers with relevant instances they felt comfortable sharing, the guide also elicited responses on the patterns of migration, government policy and migration. Finally, participants were asked to talk about other factors they felt were influencing rural-urban migration in their localities.

Interviews took place in each of the participants' residence. Interviews lasted between 30 to 45 minutes. After each interview, interview records of each participant was labelled accordingly, (e.g., gender and age) to ensure easy identification during data management and analysis processes. The interviews were digitally audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim. A note taker and a moderator were always on hand to take notes and moderate each session.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) model of thematic analysis. In doing this, themes were identified from reading and rereading the transcripts, noting any similarities and differences between and within participants' accounts. Qualitative computer package (Nvivo 11, QSR) was used to organize and assist in the task of first level analysis. Responses were further categorized within relevant themes.

III. RESULTS

Socio-demographic characteristics of the participants

Result showed that majority of the participants were middle aged with an average age of 44.9 (30-75 years age range). Their educational status showed that two third of the participants obtained tertiary education, few had secondary education, while only three had primary education. 33 out of the 40 participants were married, 5 were single, while 2 were divorced. Greater percentage (70%) of them were civil servants, 20% were traders while 10% were artisans. Analysis of the data resulted in four key themes: (a) 'the push factors of migration' (b) 'self-employment versus salaried work', (c) 'government policy and migration', and (d) 'education as a driver of rural-urban migration',

The push factors of migration

Most of the participants indicated awareness of some the factors influencing rural-urban migration. Participants gave insights on the general reasons why people migrate. Consequent upon the analysis of the qualitative data, it was found that people who migrate do so as a result number of reasons, which ranged from unavailability of employment opportunities, lack of basic social amenities and poverty to

education. The following exchange with one of the participants explains more:

Well, the reasons might be so enormous but basically, I think people move in search of job opportunities as I am saying this based on personal family experience that I have...most of my siblings and I who now reside in big towns and cities moved there in order to get good jobs which are usually not available in the rural areas (**Male respondent 2, 51 years**).

In the same vein, another participant noted the rural areas do not always provide the necessary opportunities for one to thrive. "There are no much job opportunities in this area that is the reason I left for the city" (**Female respondent 9, 43 years**). The above respondents' identification of lack of employment opportunities as one of the main reasons for migration was in line with most of the IDI participants in the study who mentioned it. Alongside this factor, other factors were also identified as factors propelling rural-urban migration in the study area. Participants noted that poverty is one of the major causes of rural-urban migration. They averred that poverty is a major force driving rural-urban migration as many rural dwellers sees the urban areas as places laden with opportunities for one to improve his life. A respondent stated thus:

We could actually relate it (rural-urban migration) to poverty, which in itself is associated with underdevelopment. Remember also that poverty at this level is reflected in the poor quality of life which is also peculiar to rural communities. This is why you see that a lot of people are scrambling to move to urban centres or anything that looks or feels like it (a mere reflection of urban life) even when they do not know the nature of the places they are moving to (**Female respondent 1, 44 years**).

The above quote reflects an idea in migration studies where people move in search of better opportunities and access to humanities. The above female respondent cites poverty in rural area and poor quality of life factors in her decision to migrate. The challenge is that they are not sure of the nature and conditions of the places they are moving to. Similarly, another participant explained that:

There is this general inclination to migrate from rural to urban areas, which to me is tied to the perceived chances for better life. There is this belief among our people that the socio-economic conditions of people in the city are better off and that the earlier one moves out of the rural area, the better the chances one gets to become successful... most of the time, the appearances and lifestyle of those who return home from the urban areas give credence to these perceptions (**Male respondent 19, 48 years**).

This expression by this male participant depicts a situation where the life styles of returned migrants reignite a belief that life is better in urban areas. This sort of believes is

characteristic of human nature where places unknown to them are highly thought of. Going further, participants were also asked to give other reasons which they think could lead to migration to the urban areas. Prominent among their responses was lack of social amenities. Many participants identified lack of social amenities as one of the drivers of migration in the rural areas. However, respondents were of the view that those who migrated to the cities on permanent basis because of lack of basic social amenities in the rural areas were those who might have tested urban lives sometime in the past. For instance, a participant had this to say:

A good friend of mine joined me in the city because according to him, he cannot bear to stay in a place where there is poor mobile network as well as erratic power supply...this is a person whose parents are categorized as wealthy in this community because they have palm oil and kernel processing factory that is flourishing. I know that his parents wanted him to take over the business as they are getting old but because he had his tertiary education in Abuja (capital of Nigeria), he quickly rushed back to the city where he feels he had become used to after spending just one year in this area (**Male respondent 5, 35 years**).

This respondent's narrative creates a picture of someone that had the opportunity to acquire wealth within the rural area but because he had had opportunity to enjoy some sort of social amenities in the time past, he is unable to stay in his community where such things are barely available.

Self-employment versus salaried work

Having found from the respondents some of the factors that influence rural-urban migration, I further probed to find out the circumstances surrounding their decision to migrate, their preferred choices of occupation while aiming to move to the urban areas and what informed such choices. To this, most participants suggested that salaried work or wage labour as it is sometimes called is more preferred to the idea of becoming self-employed. While analyzing the reasons given by the study's participants, a common pattern was recorded across the elicited qualitative data; job security. In other words, they expressed that job security explains why many people migrate to urban areas in order to secure what majority of them tagged "government work" as opportunities for such kind of jobs are mainly found in the urban centres. In justifying this perception that government work is mainly the preferred choice for migrants, a participant expressed herself in this way: "the reason for this preference can be attributed to the fact that everybody wants something steady...something (remuneration) which comes monthly and which guarantees steady pension after retirement" (**Female respondent 3, 60 years**). In the same light, another participant discusses more:

What is as good as paid employment? Government work... no, I have not seen anything like that. Forget the fact that some people who are doing business in the urban areas are hitting it big time. It's only but a few and you don't know how they started... and their ups and downs. But once you get government work, you are covered. You are sure that

by the end of every month, your money will come. And it will continue like that for life because even when you retire, pension benefit will follow. But for self-employment! Anything can happen. One natural disaster or profit loss and everything is blown away and you will have to start all over again...if there is anything to start over with (**Male respondent 9, 46 years**).

These expressions highlight the level of prestige people in this side of the world attached to salaried work especially that offered by government. For them, it guarantees job security and steady income flow. While majority of the participants attempted to prove that salaried work (especially the types provided by governments) is the preferred choice of most migrants, they equally intimated that most of them were averse to establishing a private business no matter how small whether in the village or in towns. A participant who shared an experience was of the view that some migrants jostle for government work either because of the prestige attached to it or out of the sheer fear of the risk involved in establishing a business. This view is captured in the following narrative:

Personally, I never wanted to go into business. I see it as a bit risky and unsecured. Immediately I finished my schooling I moved in to Lagos (a big city in Nigeria) to stay with my elder brother. My main target was to work in any government establishment...even when the job was not forthcoming I still persist against all advice to take up a small scale business until I got one for myself (**Male respondent 13, 48 years**).

Similarly, participants equally stressed that job security informed their choice of government work in the first place. A respondent stated thus:

Even though some government work do not pay all that well, you are however assured of steady flow of income. In this case, it will allow you to make projections for the future and embark on calculated expenditures rather than embarking on free for all expenditure which is what most business people do expecting that they will bounce back tomorrow (**female respondent 6, 37 years**).

Implicit in the responses of these migrants is that setting up personal businesses is a risky and uncertain adventure and this informed their choice of government jobs no matter how menial it appears to be. Government jobs are seen as free for all and a right every citizen must enjoy and such a view point could have heightened the desire of most rural migrants to prefer government jobs to self-employment. In a rather blunt but direct answer, a participant laid it bare in this manner: "government work of course. We all want that. Who doesn't want a share of the 'national cake'?" (**Male respondent 21, 35 years**). (*National cake is a local slang that refers to the national treasury*). This position may well be the opinion of many youths in these rural communities who may feel disenchanting by the alarming rate of corruption in the country perpetrated by their leaders while they wallow in abject poverty. When it was probed further to know if their choice was influenced by lack of initial capital to start up a business of their

own, most of them were of the opinion that initial capital was not necessarily the problem but that their decision was born out of rational choices. One of the participants stressed thus:

My choice of government work was not due to lack of initial capital to start up a business here in my community but a decision born out choice.... As a matter of fact, my father had the resources to start up a business here for me in the village but I objected to it. Instead, I jokingly told him to use the money to get me a government job if it were possible (**male respondent 1, 40 years**).

Corroborating the above point, another participant stated that “it was my aunty that asked me to leave the village and come and stay with her in Port Harcourt City as I stand a better chance of getting job there than engaging in small scale business in the village” (**Female respondent 5, 32 years**). These views as expressed by participants suggest that there are people who from onset, do not want to venture into business. However, there are still some individuals whose sole goal is to work for themselves instead of working for an employer that pays a salary or a wage as indicated by a few of the respondents. These set of people are by implication, risk takers as it were. For instance, a participant noted thus:

When I found myself in the city, I decided to use the little money I had to start up a small scale business by the road side instead of waiting for government jobs which I do not know when it will come. Thankfully, my business is thriving (**Male respondent 17, 38 years**).

Education and rural-urban migration

Furthermore, respondents were asked to share from their experiences the set of people (the educated and none educated) who they think are more inclined to move to urban areas. Most of the participants responded almost with a similar view that the educated ones are more likely than the uneducated to move to the urban areas. For instance, a participant (**Female respondent 13, 48 years**) opined that “most migrants are young graduates who are looking for greener pasture because I also left when I finished school as well”. Another participant stated that “tertiary education is the reason...as you can see; I don’t live in the village. I left the moment I finished school because I felt the rural environment do not fit me any longer” (**Male respondent 3, 30 years**). This views as expressed by participants corroborate what is seen in migration literature that education drives migration. While still explaining the influence of education on migration, the participants maintained that university education comes with a lot of exposure and that those who have acquired this level of exposure are unlikely to remain in the village. A participant noted that:

University education equips one with some level of skills and knowledge that are mainly suitable for the kind of jobs you find in the cities. Unemployed graduates migrate to urban areas because of the varieties of opportunities that are available; most especially white collar or administrative jobs (**Male respondent 8, 39 years**).

Imbedded in their responses is that education to a large extent, contribute to rural-urban migration. Offering more insight into this, another participant elaborated thus:

Comparatively, young and educated people have the propensity to migrate more than their uneducated counterparts. You do not expect an educated young man or woman to sit idly in the village that offers little or no opportunity for them to showcase their potentials. Besides, when compared to the uneducated ones, the educated ones have more job opportunities in urban settings (**Female respondent 2, 40 years**).

Adding another dimension to the issue of education, participants noted that there are people who migrate to urban centres in order to receive higher education because of the lack of educational facilities in rural areas. They argue on the fact that most rural communities lack basis facilities for proper education thereby pushing those who have the resources for further education to move to urban areas to achieve their goals. They maintained that majority of this set of migrants prefer to remain in the urban areas after the completion of their education rather than coming back home. A participant puts it thus:

The desire for higher education has moved many young people away from the various communities around. In doing so, you find that it is mainly the uneducated youth and some old people that are in the communities. Some of these young migrants usually do not like to come back as they have been exposed to the other side of the world which they feel is better. I am not saying that uneducated ones do not embark on migration but comparatively, education is a big force in rural-urban migration (**Male respondent 7, 37 years**).

As can be seen in the foregoing, education has a key role to play in migration. Put side by side, the educated have a higher propensity to move than their uneducated counterparts.

Government policy and migration

In a bid to comprehensively capture the various factors in rural-urban migration, it was further probed to find out government role in rural-urban migration. To this end, data from IDI sessions showed that most of the participants indicated that government policies have helped to influence rural-urban migration. Nevertheless, they (participants) expressed divergent views as to how they think that government policies have impacted on rural-urban migration. For instance, a participant stated thus:

It is glaring that there is lack of government presence in the sense that most government policies are not usually targeted at the grass root levels. Instead, government focuses on urban areas at the expense of the rural settings. The failure of government in building the needed facilities capable of improving the living conditions of the rural dwellers make a lot of people to want to migrate to urban areas (**Male respondent 4, 51 years**).

This perspective is also shared by another participant who stressed “that the lack of political wills on the part of the government to provide job opportunities and other social amenities is enough to encourage rural-urban migration” (**female respondent 7, 30 years**). A long period of rural neglect by successive governments is seen as a contributing factor to rural urban migration. Concentrating companies and industries in urban areas at the expense of rural areas also explains one of the reasons why most developmental projects have not been favourable to rural dwellers. According to one of the study’s participants, “If you compare rural areas to urban areas, you will see a huge difference...for instance in the city, you will see a lot of companies, industries and other attractions which encourages investment in the city” (**Female respondent 15, 44 years**). Accordingly, participants expressed that aside the fact that government policies are hardly implemented in Nigeria; it is particularly worrisome that the rural areas suffer more in terms of basic amenities. All of these when merged together tend push people who reside in rural areas to migrate towards big town and cities.

IV. DISCUSSION

The study investigated the dynamics of wage prestige and its implication on rural-urban migration using a total of 40 (25 males and 15 females) eligible participants. In other words, (62.5%) of the eligible interview participants were males compared to the females with (37.5%). This is indicative of the fact that more males than females were eligible for inclusion in the study. Nonetheless, it highlights an already existing norm in this part of the country where it is the males that usually move to cities especially after the completion of first degree or immediately after secondary education to search for work for sustenance of the family. Young and unmarried females who chose to move to the urban areas are basically perceived as wayward or just being after prostitution. The results indicate that all the participants were well aware of the existence of rural-urban migration in their localities, all of whom had experienced it firsthand.

It was found that most rural migrants are averse to the idea of being self-employed. They would rather move to the urban areas in search of white-collar jobs than establish business in the rural areas even when the resources are available. In addition, migrants showed a preference for government job than other jobs no matter their take home. This finding is similar to that reported by Mukhtar et al. (2018) and Aworemi et al. (2018) which identified unemployment as a force driving migration in rural villages. However, this present study extends our knowledge by revealing migrants’ choice of work, their attitudes towards other jobs and the underlining reasons. Arriving at the decision to migrate, most migrants already have a made-up mind about their preferred choice of occupation in their destinations and as a result, would not usually be open to take up other jobs. Three main reasons were found to be behind such preference for government jobs over others. The first is job security. They believe that once you secure government job, your future is secured. Secondly, there is this idea of steady income. Government job guarantees

steady income for life. There is also this sheer believe among participants that government jobs provide the avenue to tap from the national treasury. This believe therefore reinforce the desire for government jobs at all means.

In the context of this study, it was found that self-employment is perceived as risky, uncertain and unsteady without financial security. This perception of self-employment as a risky adventure is found among many of the respondents. However, it shows that most of the migrants are unaware of business insurance. It further highlights a common trend were most businesses in this area (even in most part of the country [Nigeria]) are not covered by insurance. Many people are not aware of insurance talk more of insuring their businesses. Ignorance of the existence of insurance companies or perhaps, lack of one within their immediate environment, could inform this perception about self-employment.

Findings also showed that comparatively, those adjudged to be educated are more likely to migrate than their uneducated counterparts. The result indicates that educated ones found the rural environment as no longer capable of meeting their potentials because of the new skills and knowledge they possess. This finding highlights the lack of government agencies or industries to absorb some of these migrants. The finding is consistent with the findings of Umar et al. (2018) which had found that most rural areas lacked basic amenities to curtail mass movement of people to the urban areas. Also, those seeking higher education have more propensities to migrate than those who do not wish to further their education. This finding corroborates earlier studies which had linked migration to education (e.g., Resosudarmo & Suryadarma, 2014; Liao et al., 2017; Bundervoet, 2018).

Furthermore, there is a belief among migrants that long neglect of rural areas by government fan the desire to migrate to the urban areas. The thrust of the argument was that there is lack of government presence in that their policies do not usually favour the rural people. Instead, government focuses on urban areas at the expense of the rural settings. The unavailability of basic amenities in rural communities emanating from decades of neglect contributes largely to rural-urban migration. This position is strengthened by the lack of access roads, pipe borne water, government agency or parastatals, etc, in these areas.

Findings from the present research have revalidated the key assumptions of the Harris-Todaro’s model in the understanding of rural-urban migration. As shown in the analysis, the decision to migrate was influenced by economic incentives (e.g., getting government jobs, the lure of better economic condition). This affirms the views of the participants that most migrants have predetermined choice of occupation (government jobs) while arriving at the decision to migrate. Secondly, the findings of the study confirmed the second assumption of the model that migration is influenced by rural-urban income differentials (the probability of higher income at the urban areas compared to the rural areas). In applying the Harris-Todaros’s model to wage prestige and rural-urban

migration, this study observed findings consistent with those of prior research that have reported similar findings. Nonetheless, the findings of this study have important population implications. When young individuals move away from the rural areas, due to wage prestige and other variables identified herein; it leaves the urban population at risk. It leads to over population of the urban areas which breeds crime and other social vices. Furthermore, even the so-called government jobs which appear to be the preferred choice of most migrants may not be easy to come by due to the number of persons that would be jostling for it. On the other hand, as Lykke (2000) has posited; it leaves the rural population with mainly old people who might not be able to comfortably combat the challenges of the rural areas. Therefore, by providing empirical as well as theoretical insights into the dynamics of rural-urban migration, this study provides a crucial understanding of certain unique challenges facing most rural communities in Nigeria and some part of sub-Saharan Africa.

The study also has its limitations. One of the limitations is the use of only purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The study did not employ other insightful qualitative methods (observational and or longitudinal qualitative method), which could have helped to explore other aspects of rural-urban migration which this present study could not. Secondly, benching the age of the participants from thirty years (30 years) and above might be biased. As a result, future research endeavour should address the limitations identified in the research. Despite these limitations, the study adds to extant knowledge about rural-urban migration by going a step further to reveal how aversion to self-employment has increased the prestige attached to government jobs and its impact on rural-urban migration. The study indicated that most migrants prefer government jobs to any other job and have predetermined choice of occupation at the point of departure. Furthermore, the study has important sociological and population implications for the country (Nigeria). The study findings also provide important cues for policy making aimed at rural communities in Nigeria and other developing economies.

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