

**MENACE OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MIGRATION:
CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA**

Dr. Nworgu, Kelechi Godson and Dr. Collins Okechukwu Amadi
Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences
University Of Port Harcourt, P.M.B. 5323 Choba, Port Harcourt, Nigerai

Email:nworgugodson10@gmail.com, otukiri63@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Unemployment is the condition where workable individuals are unable to find job. The condition and its impacts have led to increase in the number of applicants leaving the country to search for survival in foreign countries. The paper explored the menace of unemployment and international migration: challenges and prospects. There are two research objectives which include to evaluate the challenges of unemployment in Nigeria and to ascertain the determinants to the rise in the number of migrants from Nigeria to Europe. The descriptive and theoretical approaches were utilized as data used were derived from secondary sources. The findings revealed that majority of youths, workable men and women are unable to find jobs in country and most of these applicants have subscribed to find jobs in foreign countries, and this given rise to the number of individuals leaving the country. Based on these findings, the study recommends among others that Government should address the issues of policies that are economically unfavourable to companies that have left the country, and put in place attractive policies that will compel foreign investors to move into the country and Government should encourage public private partnership business among key investors in the country with lesser taxation.

Keywords: unemployment, labour, migration, migrants, challenges, prospects

INTRODUCTION

Unemployment in Africa, precisely Nigeria has been on the increase as Universities, Polytechnics, and Colleges are yearly passing out graduates from their various institutions. According to The Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2017) unemployed persons are individuals of working age, who are willing and actively looking for job, but are unable to secure any. Unemployment and underemployment rate in Nigeria increased to 23.1% and 16.6% respectively (NBS, 2018). This has made individuals to migrate to places across the country searching for jobs and finding none, thereby causing more desperate persons to find jobs in mega cities, resulting to human congestion in urban cities like Lagos and Abuja Nigeria. The local migration to these urban cities has caused demographical problems, and the failure to get job has also increased insecurity and other social problems in those cities Christian (2019).

The persistency of unemployment has been bedeviling the unemployed overtime, and has become a major threat to the socio-economic as well as political development of the society (Musa & Dokko, 2018). Most violent crimes comprising armed robbery, extremisms, terrorism, kidnapping, political violence and armed banditries are being perpetrated by unemployed individuals in society. Osbohien et. al., (2018) argue that the menace of unemployment in Africa defies both social, economic, and moral policy issues. The situation concerns a huge number of unemployed youths and adults in both rural or urban settings, who migrate to places in order to find white collar work to do, of which the cases of women and men in rural as well as the urban population is on the high side.

This menace has indicated poor governance system in Nigeria. In a way to obscure the unemployment rate in Nigeria, pressure was mounted on NBS to change modalities in arriving to conclusion on the unemployment rate that they declared in 2022, which was at 33.3%, which was queried by Chris Ngige, past minister of labour and productivity under Buhari's administration. To satisfy the government, efforts were made by NBS to collect data from the informal sector, (rural women and men, petty traders, menial workers) and Nigeria labour force survey report for 2022 to

include individuals recorded as being employed, and which accounted for 92.6% of informal employment, while underemployment was left at 12.2%. To this end, NBS, (2023) gave this controversial data claiming that Nigeria's unemployment rate was at 4.1% in the first quarter of 2023, which was prompted by the previous rate of 5.3% in the fourth quarter of 2022. However, Ndjie et. al., (2019), had argued that the control of corruption and political instability are the major indicators that can reduce unemployment in Nigeria. The unemployment rate of United States as at December 2010 was 9.4%, while that of Spain appear to be higher, at 20.6% (Newsweek 2011). Meanwhile, research on unemployment has been presented from both macro and micro perspectives, which majors on discussion that concerns unemployment insurance policies, job creation and individual experiences Hanisch (1999).

In the same vein, international labour migration has been a trending issue in Africa and Europe. Failure of applicants to find job in most African countries, Nigeria in particular, has led to increase of migrants thronging some European countries to search for survival. Over 211 Million people has migrated to Europe as at 2010, and this huge number represent 3.1% population of the world, (Brücker et. al., 2013). Furthermore, the process of migration in recent times is very costly, and despite that, several people still make their way through to Europe due to future benefits they intend to derive. Similarly, other consequences of migration, involving policy restrictions, flight costs and relocation costs, finding a new job, and learning a new language poses some level of challenge. However, the uncertainty and risk involved in attempting to migrate to foreign countries makes some people decide to stay rather than leaving.

Considering how and why people leave their country, to become migrants, one would imagine what other factors that may compel them to do so. Although, some may give reason of educational pursuit, international business affiliation, and government representation on international corporate or diplomatic affairs to relocate to Europe or elsewhere as the case may be. To this end, international labour migration is on the rise, making the world migrants rate to keep rising (Docquier et. al., 2014). It has been observed that most migrants are males who have attained high educational qualification from Universities and colleges, however, it is apparently getting clearer that female migrants are also on the increase, and the number is gradually surging substantially in recent times. Europe and the United States are the destinations of most labour migrants, this amounts to 20% of the immigration stocks in those countries, and there are few individuals migrating to Asia and Arabian countries as well Ozden et al., (2011). Furthermore, the size and increase of migration poses serious policy issues on countries and raise more questions on the possible consequences and effects of migration.

According to Hugo & Morén-Alegret (2008) international labour migration is among the key factors that contribute to the reshaping of contemporary Europe, and plays a major role in agriculture improvement for the present and future. In addition, rural regions in European countries are gaining increasingly as migrants from Africa and other parts of the world arrive, and they are shaping rural communities in ways "which can be distinguished from international migration to urban areas" (Hedberg & Haandrikman 2014, p. 137). Woods (2012) argues that there are challenges arising from international labour migration patterns from Africa, to Europe and across industries in rural spaces. While people are migrating as a result of unemployment, the consequences in Africa may include frustrating of social-economic, social-political and sustainable development efforts.

In this era of rising migration Dufty-Jones (2014) argues that the contemporary issues of migrant labour associates to global political, legal, economic and socio-cultural processes that aids such movement. Similarly, political turmoil, economic instability as well as poor living conditions in Africa have generated migration flows into Europe and United States. These are some factors that lubricate the migration process, which also facilitate international labour migration (McCollum & Findlay, 2017). Migrant workers are mostly found in low wage industries which are situated mainly in rural communities across Europe. They generally occupy unattractive, dishonoring and disempowered work positions in several industries like food production industry, textile industry, waste

management industry amongst others (Rye & Andrzejewska 2010). These migrants are usually being represented, and also treated differently and distinguishably from other domestic workers. Reflecting on these facts, scholars on migrant labour in rural European regions (Rye 2007) has argued further, and employed a "dual" or "segmented" kind of labour market in Europe, resulting to tightened and controlled employment process and placement in food production industry (Ortiz 2002, p. 406-409) and paving way for exploitation of foreign migrants. In addition, there are ample evidence showing how migrants are being maltreated in southern and northern Europe where labour force are more informal as well as less regulated (Corrad et. al. 2017). The paper seeks to investigate the impacts of unemployment, determinants and consequences of rising rate of international labour migration and the exploitation as well as maltreatment suffered by foreign migrants in Europe and the United States.

Objectives of the study include to:

- i. evaluate the challenges of unemployment in Nigeria.
- ii. ascertain the determinants to the rise in the number of migrants from Nigeria to Europe.

Research questions consists the following:

- i. What are the challenges of unemployment in Nigeria?
- ii. What are the determinants to the rise in the number of migrants from Nigeria to Europe?

Challenges of Unemployment

Unemployment Versus Psychological Health

Unemployment poses psychological threat to the health of both the unemployed and their family members daily, as the thought of being unemployed and the socio-economic factors associated will keep hurting them, and will deprive them from having what is necessary to meet family demands. Psychological health therefore, refers to a person's mental and emotional well-being, behavior, ability to cope in society, and capacity to satisfy the demands of day to day life Paul & Moser (2009). The relationship between unemployment and psychological health is notably strong. Comparing the psychological health of employed and unemployed individuals, the analysis by Paul & Moser (2009) showed that unemployed individuals had lesser levels of psychological health than those employed (Paul & Moser 2009). The mental health of every unemployed individual and that of the employed have wide difference in studies conducted on unemployed men than women, blue-collar employees, individuals who are unemployed for a long period, and nations with low or no unemployment protection systems for its citizens. Furthermore, unemployment arising from layoffs, redundancy, and expiration of work contract are perceived to be harmful to the well-being and psychological health of those affected (Brady, 2010). However, Paul & Moser (2009) argued that the relationship between unemployment as well as lower psychological health of unemployed individuals has remained stronger since past decades.

Unemployment Versus Suicide

Some individuals think of suicide whenever they encounter most distressing conditions. One of such situations can be the prevalent experience of unemployment, making individuals to find it distressing enough to give in to suicide Platt & Hawton (2000). Furthermore, Platt & Hawton (2000) argued that unemployment has a link with both para suicide (self-injurious behavior) or suicide. However, it becomes difficult to differentiate between suicidal individuals affected by unemployment versus a stress-produced outcome of the experience of unemployment. Specifically, there are reports of increased suicide with individuals of low socioeconomic position culminating from unemployment and layoffs, (Rehkopf & Buka, 2006). According to Stack & Wasserman (2007) the relationship between unemployment and suicide was observed in cases of people taking their lives in such that a 61-year old folk killed himself after he lost his lawn service job. However, suicides were found to be common with individuals that are unemployed, combined with others who are unable to pay for

living accommodation, or have lost their home or even being unemployed yet in a poor relationship with spouse.

Several researchers claim that unemployment is linked to more suicides than issues of economic recession. This places more risks among the jobless folks in society. According to Boseley (2015) unemployment in bad or good times is a stronger factor in some reported cases of suicides than during economic crisis. Suicide results to deaths nine times as many other deaths incidences. Unemployment accounted for over 45,000 deaths between 2000 to 2011 in 63 countries. Without government making effort in investing in the labour market, more jobless individuals are prone to die as a result of the stress and inability to fend for their families averagely.

Unemployment Versus Physical Health

Several researchers have increasingly argued that unemployment can affect physical health of individuals, and not just psychological health alone. Certain poor health conditions can be attributed to unemployment. This is because unemployment reduces physical health. According to Strully (2009) unemployment is argued to have a declining impact on physical health of individuals. For example, a group previously employed, lost their jobs due to closure of a company, out of which 83% reported poor health conditions like hypertension, arthritis, or diabetes. This was basically the case of individuals who reported losing their jobs due to a mass layoff, and have remained unemployed for a long time. The news of being fired raised further new health problem increase by 43% Korpi (2001). The risk is high for individuals to remain unemployed, because it can worsen the health status of the individuals who have long spells of unemployment that has not been abated. Study has shown that males who were laid off of their jobs in the early 1980s in Pennsylvania had high mortality rates than individuals who were employed (Sullivan & Von-Wachter 2009). However, Sullivan & Wachter (2009) argued further that it is possible for mortality rate to be increased among involuntarily displaced or laid off individuals. They also argue that associated mortality consequences or effects from job loss are inseparable from physical health problems as it takes little longer for it to show up. Maier et. al. (2006) observed some changes in both physical capacity and cortisol levels of 71 unemployed individuals in first year of their unemployment state. Some unemployed persons had a decrease in general physical working capacity (Janicki-Deverts et al. 2008) due to elevated stress condition, and an increased risk of hypertension, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. By this, it can be concluded that unemployment can have a great impact on the physical health of individuals who are unemployed.

Unemployment Versus Leadership

Nigeria is the largest black race with a projected population of about 184 million people as at 2018 (National Population Commission, 2018). The country is multiethnic, and have been under several leaders, since after it gained independence from British colonization. The leaders in past were both military and civilians, who are supposed to utilize natural and mineral resources endowed in the nation for development in all ramifications. Most of these leaders resort to use state machinery and resources to enrich themselves rather than erecting industries that could cushion the pressure of unemployment in the country (Herbst & Olukoshi, 1994). In addition, the prevalent economic and political systems of Nigeria have often favoured the elite, helping them to amass enormous wealth for themselves and their political groups, while majority of other citizens continues in unemployment, and to living below poverty line. Nigeria have had bad leadership overtime; this invariably shows that individuals in the helms of affairs in the country have no vision for the industrialization of all parts of the country, instead they play politics with everything that should improve and develop the country.

Nigeria lacks leaders that are proactive enough in terms of jobs creation for rapidly increasing population. A former Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo at International Labour Conference, in Geneva, expressed his disappointment over the level of unemployment ravaging entire Africa, because governments and leaders in Africa had not ventured more in creating jobs. He vividly stated, "I am worried, I am apprehensive about unemployment in our continent. It is not being taken as

seriously as it should be" (Adegbami, 2013, p. 15). Nigeria's unemployment rate is spiraling, and the rising nature of unemployment have made able body men and women vulnerable to several manipulations by government Adebayo (2013).

Lack of leaders that are committed; competent; and visionary in Nigeria's development and industrialization has bedeviled all job seeking individuals in no little manner due to the persistency and unabated increasing rate of unemployment in the country. The consequences of lack of good leadership and governance is unemployment, inflation and poverty which are hitting hard on unemployed people currently. But if the stolen funds had been invested in the country, rather been carted away by politicians in power, who deceive the masses with vain promises, and indulges in projects that enriches them and their accomplices, so many industries that can employ hundreds of people would have built either by government or in partnership with local or foreign investors. In this situation, the government should be more concerned in making the country safer and friendly as to attract more foreign investors.

Rising Level of International Labour Migration

Migration in recent times has been observed to be on the increase as a result of massive exodus of Africans to Europe and the United States. The reason for rising migration may not only be hinged on income differences or disparities between home and destination countries, but, it can also be motivated by geographic, technological and historical factors like language and colonial links which accounts for 20% to 30% of bilateral migration flows between Africa and Europe. In addition, minimal number of individuals in developing countries, having high rate of low-skilled migrants to Europe are indeed characterized by colonial ties as well as geographic proximity. Migration is perceived to have impact on development of destination countries, while resulting to impoverishment of sending countries in several ways. Migration therefore, produces shocks, behavioural and policy responses, and it can affect labour resource utilization, sustainable development and productivity in sending countries; which also have influence in socio-economic growth, poverty as well as inequality Katseli et. al., (2006).

There are many identifiable ways that migration has added either direct or indirect positive impact on development. Migrating to destination countries creates opportunity for the labour markets to absorb labour emigrants into available low wages job vacancies. It is an avenue for employment generation, tax remittances, human capital and assets accumulation, diaspora networks and return migration. Migration gains may be diffused within sending countries, while labour force is integrated and segmented because of inadequate infrastructure or ethno-cultural barriers. Gains can also be restricted within migrant communities, which might as well increase relative deprivation among non-migrants. However, massive and unmanaged migration of highly-skilled migrants, can have negative effects on service delivery, resulting to inequality among group of migrants that are drawn from sending countries. Moreover, massive migration of labour might possess both positive and negative social, economic and development consequences (Katseli et. al., 2006). This effects may include children's education and healthcare issues depending on the role of women and family changes among family members within the society.

Migration into Europe appears to be on the rise, and this can most likely continue to increase in future. It is believed and expected that migration will increase by more than 13 million individuals from 456.8 million in 2004 to about 470.1 million in 2025, accounting on population growth of net migration into Europe (COM, 2005). The ageing nature of European societies, low intra-European movements, the maintenance of high incomes, desirable standard of living and good policies are some of the basic factors or determinants compelling migration into Europe; other important factors include increasing population growth with no corresponding efforts by government to increase socioeconomic development and improvement, problem of high unemployment, dilapidated infrastructures, less motivating working conditions, acute poverty, high level of insecurity and bad economic prospects.

Managing migration flows as well as improving migrants' integration effectively into European societies has become an integral priority as it concerns policy issues. There is a growing awareness that migration can substantially offer gains both to the destination and originating countries. However, the increasing level of migration calls for proper management of migration due to associated challenges needed to be addressed effectively to avert all the risks associated with it; such as human trafficking, illegalities, money laundering as well as possible marginalization, exploitation or alienation of migrant communities. Failure to effectively manage migration can threaten the rule of law, social cohesion and may to some level of economic decline in host countries while increasing insecurity for migrants and the local communities. There is more awareness in Europe on tackling migration flows, this is done through developing security agendas and a coherent policy framework that is effectively implemented, as to forestall security, development as well as creating a secured environment, preventing poverty, war, environmental degradation and failing social and political structures Katseli et. al., (2006).

Causes of Rising Labour Migration

Massive production and flow of goods, services, capital, economic and technological development in developed countries have created more opportunities for individuals in poor countries to migrate to America and Europe in recent times (Bang & MacDermott, 2019). More so, economic development is perceived to have the capacity to propel changes and encourage demographic impacts, urbanization, human capital, and international linkages that complements migration flows (Clemens 2020). The slow economic development and underdevelopment in migrant-origin poor countries do influence global migration. In real sense, the term migration in modern era is associated with the development that has happened in developed countries. Migration is common to where development is paramount. This situation attracts Africans to the richest countries in the globe (Hanson & McIntosh 2016).

Effects of Rising Global Mobility

According to Edo et. al., (2020) the effect of labour migration on individuals' average wage or employment of the countries indigenous workers is slightly positive or put at zero impact in the short to long term. Meanwhile, in the past half-century where migrants were prevented as at before 1970 caused indigenous employees to receive some form of low incomes (Tabellini 2019; Abramitzky & Boustan, 2017). However, recent issues of migration have witnessed moderate increase in domestic pay inequality mainly at the destination countries. It has also increased pretax incomes for the well-educated indigenes than for the least educated individuals (Ottaviano & Peri 2012) which has eroded indigenous workers' willingness to effectively redistribute (Alesina et. al., 2021) meanwhile, the little from the overall increase of the inequality can be attributed to migrant wage competition at the negative aspect of the distribution (Goldin et. al, 2007). The search to locate job in more productive countries has led to the resurgence of global migration and this has also increased global economic product (Dustmann & Preston, 2019) as well as modestly contributed to reducing global inequality (Clemens et al., 2019). However, these impacts have been low due to lesser migration rate.

Migration Determinants

The most outstanding reason for migration decision is the difference between the per-capita income of home and destination countries, particularly for high-skilled migrants Grogger & Hanson (2011). The second factor increasing migration flows is the connection with the diasporas. The influence on immigration flows is attributed to the effect of migration diasporas in the destination country (Beine et. al., 2014). This means that individuals who has migrated already into a destination country may assist prospective migrants by providing them useful information and offer them help from destination countries. In addition, diasporas existence can reduce the cost of migrations.

Furthermore, individual expectations from destination countries can influence migration

flows. This because individuals planning to migrate do not only rely on their current earnings either in the home or destination countries, rather they form more expectations about future income growth Bertoli et al. (2013).

Migration policies is another factor that can also change migration flows. This evidence is presented by Beerli & Peri (2015) in which they asserted that the effect of migration policies implementation of EU-Swiss often restrict migrants' free movement. In addition, the relaxation of EU-Swiss policies on migration restrictions contributed to the increase in the number of low wages foreign workers in Switzerland. These policies include VISA waivers and VISA policies (Bertoli et. al., 2015), multilateral agreements or decisions (Beine et al., 2013) and immigration reforms (Ortega & Peri, 2012).

Consequences for Home Country

As migration flow keeps increasing, certain consequences abound which might positively or negatively affects home countries. This impacts have been observed since 50 years ago. However, most migrants come from poor countries as they seek to relocate to rich and developed countries (Ozden et al., 2011). Furthermore, most of the migrants' flows are mainly high-skilled individuals. The high flow of migrants contributes to loss of human capital in the sending country which invariably result to Brain Drain (Docquier & Rapoport, 2012). The loss connected to the reduction in human capital is an economic consequence. In the home or sending countries, the domestic labour market will become rigid, resulting to negative consequences for the poor countries. As the high-skill individuals from poor countries move to rich countries, these countries become richer as they exploit the human capital existing the developing countries. However, the Brain Drain can also have positive consequences on origin countries. In such situation, migrants usually remit fund to their families in the home countries by sending them part of their income.

Consequences for Foreign or Destination Countries

There are debates over the vivid consequences of migration of labour on the destination or foreign countries. These arguments have been the mostly discussed among several scholars over the years. Moreover, Borjas (2003); Borjas (2017) & Monras (2015) opined that the effect of immigration on wages seem little, but with some negative outcomes. Hence, the evidence that the impacts of immigrants on wages and its effect on employment rate of indigenes could be negligible or may even appear to be positive Ottaviano & Peri (2012); Beerli & Peri (2015), Foged & Peri (2016)). However, there is no general effect of migrants on wages, but most scholars argue in favour of little or no positive impacts of immigration on the destination countries even as Borjas (2017) argue that any increase in the supply of migrants in the same education level or even work experience group can affect the wages of citizens because there may be a fall in labour demand. This is because there is imperfect substitutability between migrants and citizens of the destination countries. In addition, Peri & Sparber (2009) argue that immigrants could decide to specialize in various tasks than even the citizens, hence complementing the local labour force.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The descriptive survey design aided the paper. As a theoretical investigation, the relevant data were retrieved from secondary materials. The materials were internet sources, journals and magazines. The findings show that several unemployed youths, workable men and women have found that the alternative to having jobs is to migrate to countries that economically stable and rich to search and secure jobs that can afford the means of having resources that can enable them to survive and afford the basic needs of their families. The findings also indicate that individuals from the sending countries and destination countries do experience both positive and negative consequences which include amassing wealth and brain drain.

CONCLUSION

As unemployment menace has been discussed, the paper has unraveled the inherent challenges faced by the unemployed individuals and their families, and its negative influence on the psychological and emotional wellbeing of unemployed persons to have the tendencies to commit suicide for not being able to cater for their domestic and economic needs. Therefore, the rising demand for job among applicants has contributed to incessant increase in the number of individuals leaving their home countries to find greener pastures in other foreign countries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following are recommended:

- i. Government should address the issues of policies that are economically unfavourable to companies and put in place attractive policies that will compel foreign investors into the country.
- ii. Government should encourage public private partnership business among key investors in the country with lesser taxation.
- iii. Government should provide welfare packages for unemployed individuals in the country and should deduct whatever has been given as welfare package from the wages of such individual whenever he/she secures any employment.

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