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Table of Contents

Exploring School Leadership: Global Perspectives and Local Insights from Sub-Saharan Africa Babalola, Joel B.	1-11
Effects of Role-Play and Guided-Inquiry Strategies on the Performance Of Upper Basic Social Studies Students Afolabi, Anifat Abiodun	12-36
Family Involvement and Girl Child’s Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Ibadan North Local Government Temisanren, Olawunmi Esther; Akintayo, Ajibola Isaac & Ayo–Ayinde, Adeola Iyabosola.....	37-58
The Influence of Robotics-Enhanced Instructional Strategy on Senior Secondary School Students’ Achievement in Physics in Abeokuta South Metropolis Edun, Azeez Abayomi & Awofiranye, Kemi Victoria	59-71
Secondary Education and E-Learning Programme during Pandemic: Challenges and Way Forward In Nigeria Bolanle, Adedoyin Adeola.....	72-85
"Abandoning Wealth for Scarcity": A Critical Discourse of Youth’s Orientation of Rural-Urban Migration in Southwestern Nigeria Omoniyi, Timilehin Olayinka & Matthew, Abiodun Micheal	86-108
Security Management Practices For Enhanced Safe School Environments in Public Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State, Nigeria Adieme, Franca Ginikachi & Oliobi, Gertrude Ifeoma	109-128

- Assessment of Factors Responsible for the
Inadequacy of Quality Housing in Ado Ekiti
**Ayeni, Foluso Olayinka; Taiwo, Olugbenga David &
Agboola, Joseph Taiwo 129-142**
- Educational Resources and Proficiency of Job
Skills among Students of Government Technical
Colleges, in Oyo State, Nigeria
Abiona, Olufemi Adebayo & Aduroja, Adeola Grace 143-157
- Quality Assurance Measures and Students’
Academic Performance in Public Colleges of
Education in Southwest, Nigeria
**Odunlami, Adedayo Adeniran;
Oni, Lawrence Adedayo &
Alaka, Abayomi Ambali 158-177**
- Influence of Principals Motivation Strategies on
Teaching / Learning Process of Teachers’ Job
Satisfaction in Public Senior Secondary
Schools in FCT- Abuja, Nigeria
**Musa, Hazrat Maimuna;
Ibrahim, Yusuf; Jibril, Abdulazeez..... 178-193**
- Influence of Teacher Utilisation on Student
Academic Achievement in Public Secondary
Schools in Southwestern Nigeria
Jaiyeoba, Adebola Olufunlayo & Hazzan, Moses Kayode..... 194-213
- Contemporary Issues Affecting Excellent
Service Delivery in Teacher Training Institutions
Oguntoye, Juliet Ayibakarinate 214-222
- Determination of School Price through Activity-Based
Costing Approach in The Private Secondary Schools in
Sokoto State, Nigeria
**Oyeniran, Saheed; Tunmburku, Wakkala Garba &
Osasona, Faith Olayinka 223-242**

Quality of Education in Nigerian Universities:
The Significance of Accreditation
Okeke, Emeka Paul & Isunueo, Benedicta Omeghie..... 243-259

Social Class Factors and Academic Well-Being among
Public Secondary School Students in Ekiti North
Senatorial District, Nigeria
Sanni, Adewale Babajide & Raji, Ismail Adesina..... 260-280

Vol. 25, No. 2, 2024281

Sustaining National Development through Quality
Technical Education in Ondo State, Nigeria
**Omoniyi, Emmanuel Adegoke &
Oyetade, Monilola Dasola 283-295**

School Supervision, Inspection and Quality of
Secondary Education in Ibadan North Local
Government Area, Oyo State
**Akintayo, Ajibola Isaac;
Temisanren, Olawunmi Esther &
Showunmi, Abdulazeez Abiodun..... 296-311**

Innovative Educational Management Practices in
the Implementation of the Nigeria's National Policy
on Education for Sustainable Learning: Issues,
Concerns and the Way Forward
Yabo, Aminu Musa 312-325

Parents' Social Class, Education and Employment
Status of Bank, Insurance, and other Finance
Employees in Ibadan Oyo State, Nigeria
Raji, Ismail Adesina & Kachi, Oluwatosin Motunrayo..... 326-339

- Difference in Personal Attributes of Entrepreneurship
Education Students Based On Level of Study South-West
Universities, Nigeria
Oloruntoba, O. A.; Oludipe, B.D. & Adetayo, J. O..... 340-351
- Education and Female Genital Mutilation in
Ekiti State, Nigeria
Adeyi, Moruf Olugbenga & Makinde, Temitayo Abimbola 352-363
- Internet Addiction and Peer Pressure as
Determinants of Senior Secondary School
Students' Academic Performance in Ogun State, Nigeria
Agbajeola, R. Oluwakemi..... 364-376
- Kanuri and Babur/Bura Proverbs as Technique of
Conflict Resolution and National Integration
Abba, Tahir & Bello, Usman Amsami 377-390
- Administrator Leadership Styles and Job Satisfaction
of Teaching Personnel in Secondary Schools in
Oyo State, Nigeria
Oyedeki, Ayobami A. 391-406
- Supervision and In-Service Training as Correlates of
Secondary School Teachers' Productivity in
Ogun East Senatorial District
**Garuba, Qudus Ajibola; Omidiji, Ifeoluwa Abigael &
Adeoye, Fatimah Jadesola 407-421**
- Navigating Through Change Implementation
Barriers in Institution of Learning
**Akintola, Ismaila Akinbode;
Said, Rashid Ali Al-Shuhumi &
Dawood, Abdulmalek Yahya Al-Hidabi 422-437**
- Curbing Social Vices through Social Studies
Curriculum in Nigeria
Bakare, Monisola Idayat 438-449

Appraisal of Internally Generated Revenue and School Plant Development in Osun State Public Secondary Schools Oparinde, Olayiwola Raheef	450-470
Gender-Related Issues and Labour Force Status of Federal University Graduates in Southwestern Nigeria Ajani, Mary Oluwatoyin & Ayeni, Abiodun Olumide	471-485
Perceived Influence of Principals' Leadership Styles on Teachers' Job Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Benue State, Nigeria Adeke, Wueseter Winifred; Tyokyaa, Cletus Iortswam & Mando, Patricia Nguwasen	486-506
Examining the Free Fee Policy Implementation in Public Primary Education Management in Ebonyi State, Nigeria Igu, Ntasiobi C.N.; Ogar, Joseph O. & Elechi, Catherine N.	507-528

**"ABANDONING WEALTH FOR SCARCITY": A CRITICAL DISCOURSE OF
YOUTH'S ORIENTATION OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION IN
SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This study critically examined the underlying factors driving this migration trend and its socio-economic implications. The study adopted mixed methods research design. Population comprised all youths in Southwestern Nigeria. The multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted. From each of the state simple random sampling was used to select three Local Government Areas (LGAs) each. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 35 participants from each of the LGAs making a total of 315 participants. The participants were purposively selected based on some criteria which are - he/she must have migrated to current location, must be within the age range of 30 and 49 years old; must be willing to participate in the study. In-depth interviews were conducted with key participants (two per LGA). Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. Findings showed that youths have positive orientation towards rural-urban migration and are not aware of potentials in rural areas; the Lack of infrastructure development in rural areas, lack of support system and healthcare were rated as factors predisposing rural urban migration. It is also discovered that there was persistent decline in the population of the host communities, even the available ones comprise of aged men and women, people are running away from farming. Results show various plausible solutions however, recommended that youths need to explore rural wealth with modern technological approach. There is need

for critical investments in rural community for multiple wealth creation and development.

Keywords: Rural-urban migration, Rural potentials, Wealth creation, Southwestern Nigeria

Introduction

Human nature is that which places premium on needs, yearnings, and aspirations of a better life. People celebrate the quest for descent lives and livelihoods with assured better welfare within and around the habitat-able zones of human endeavour. Hence, the need for movement of lives and property is sacrosanct to gaining better life packages. For instance, some societies' socio-economic and political activities call for incessant movements and changes in positions, residences, occupations, and other life attachments. Over the world, there has been a continuous discourse on the term migration (Brenner, Forin & Frouws, 2018). The concept has been essentially difficult to addressed due to its unassuming underlying factors of why it occurs (Ikuteyijo, 2013). Migration as a concept is an expression of people's yearnings for safety, secured and dignified better life (Nwalutu, 2016). It is an element of the socio-economic and cultural fabric of the entire human race. Migration as a phenomenon is a process that existed in years across villages, communities, cities, regions, and the world at large with the main aim of attaining greener pasture and favourable condition of service.

However, events overtook the concept and dynamism of migration right from the industrial period till the modern era (Omoniyi, Ajitoni & Amosun, 2021). Thus, the aim, interest and pattern of migration has changed holistically (Mberu & White, 2011). Rural-urban migration can be defined as the movement or conveyance of people from one area of the society or country which is perceived to be crude to another with the sole aim of assured better life or positive overall living conditions (Adedokun & Karzanova, 2019). Rural-urban migration can be referred to as a shade internal migration which depicts movement of lives and livelihood within a community or country. The impact of rural-urban migration has been researched as it increases the urban growth geometrically, that is, from the status of towns, cities and metropolis to an expand which is abnormal over a given period (Davitti

& Ursu, 2018). It is however discovered that there has been a consistent increase in the proportion of people residing in the towns, cities and metropolis compared to those in the villages and other rural areas.

According to De Haas (2008), it is perceived that greater land areas are overly used at the expense of the overall wellbeing. There has been an undivided pattern of human movement from one end to another for various reasons best known to them. In most cases, it means a socio-economic journey into metropolitan cities in a country (Ikuteyijo, 2013). This is likely to occur, when an individual or groups decide to change their residential areas to another so that labour or career-sake from low level ones to high paying jobs or opportunities. It could also imply that, individual or groups decide to move from agrarian society to economically full potentials where ease of doing business is rewarded and appreciated (Guild, 2010). Some could be forced to so in case of prisoners of wars, refugees, displaced persons, war zones etc, while others could exit for economic reasons (Ojeme, 2016). However, the impact of migration has been a thorn in the flesh of the host nations who has no plan for the newcomers. Thus, managing their arrival and settlement poses a great challenge in both developed and developing countries.

No doubt, the present economic crisis has produced massive upheaval. According to De Haas (2008) in several rural areas, it can responsibly provide the nation with renewable energy of many types, with energy-efficient housing, with food that is healthy and affordable, with open spaces, with ecosystem services, and with so much more that our nation needs (Haug, 2008). It is discovered that rural communities are facing an enormous potential loss of wealth as current generations retire or pass on, often closing businesses and leaving their assets to kin who reside outside rural areas (Davitti & Ursu, 2018). The rural society in Nigeria is at a historic juncture where several potentials human and material resources are lost (Guild, 2010). Most rural areas have found it difficult to launch workable strategies, philosophies, and institutions to activate and actualise the God-given potentials as well as build rural assets, wealth, and empire with local contents. Several of the rural dwellers are yet to see the abundant resources available within their environment (Goldin, Cameron & Balarajan, 2011). This is because many struggle to replenish these resources and create

communities where the world should come negotiating for human and material resources as well as market to answer industrial products.

Several scholars like Haugen (2012) have remarked that one of the most critical sectors of a nations' economy is the rural areas. The rural area is seen as the key source of income for many nations, capital formation, platform for raw materials and domestic industrialisation. Ikuteyijo (2012) said that rural people are notable for primary economic activities, and it is a foundation for national economic development. It is sacrosanct to state that national economy cannot have a firm footing if it is not purely rest on the development of the rural areas which are natural blessed with the tilling of the ground and farming for feeding, industrial use and exports which invariably affect the gross national products (GDPs). The rural areas should be central to government, business, people, public administration, and other stakeholders (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010). Despite its significance, many rural zones are faced with the challenges of socio-economic and political development. There is little, slow or no growth and development in many of these areas.

Many of the policies and programmes have been a top-down approach where they are made at the central level and instruction and procedure are given for execution are not necessarily felt at the grass root level (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016). The approach to rural development has debar rapid growth and development such areas are in dire need so to curb people migration from one country to another. Another factor that hinders rural development and promotes migration is the neglect of a beautifully conceived and half-implemented policies, programmes, and projects by previous government which the new government may not want to complete. At times, there is also non-inclusive, comprehensive, and sustained plans for rural life this indirectly send those who should carry the drive for development running for urban life (Nwalutu, 2016). Hence, this has slow-paced the development of the nation as well as makes migration a recurrent, compulsory and result-oriented transition to fertile land.

It is believed that the ability of rural dwellers to contribute to the gross domestic product of the Nigeria society has not been encouraging because many abandon rural lives for urban satisfaction and competition. Ikuteyijo (2013) affirmed that rural environment is notable for resources and assets such as agricultural products, natural

resources, able workforce, youths who are willing to work. However, for a very long time, many of these able youths have not been able to tap into the potentials in the rural areas but are deceived into living and working in the urban centres where chances of job are slim and business opportunities are very competitive. The world is dynamic due to changing human needs, yearnings, and aspirations. Hence, the road to development and urbanisation is building local manpower while using the available resources to generate wealth, build market economy which driven by agricultural products and natural resources as well as the will and capacity of dwellers within the communities is of paramount importance.

It is said by Haugen (2012) that youths need to be custodian of resources in such a way that the totality of the Nigeria population will benefit immensely from the management of the local resources which is critical to the growth and development of the region. By implication, this will also guarantee low-income earners, households the opportunities to expand the frontier of their business and earn a better life standard.

The effect of migration can be equated with poor socio-economic and physical development, weak or non-existence rural industrialization, moribund infrastructural facilities, weak institutional arrangement such as police stations, fire service, local courts, polling centres, etc. Guild (2010) remarked that there are other effects of the rural urban migrations, these include high rate of job opportunities, internet frauds, civil and political crises, prostitution, drug abuse. Goldin, Cameron and Balarajan (2011) added that there could also be health-related crises such as pollution from non-treatable waters, noise from machines and generators, poor waste disposal system, non-existing or poorly maintain sewage and disposal system. Nwalutu (2016) noted that there can also be the presence of poor drainage system resulting in flood. A typical example is what is obtainable in Mushin, Otodo-gbame, Lekki in Lagos and some other coastal urban centres in Nigeria. The continuous rise in various illegal settlements such as shanties, slums breed socio-cultural changes, hooliganism, which can affect core traditional and moral values are all resultant effects of rural urban migration.

Statement of the problem

Rural-urban migration is a significant socio-economic phenomenon, particularly in regions like Southwestern Nigeria, where traditional agrarian economies coexist with rapidly expanding urban centres. This migration trend involves individuals leaving their rural communities, often characterised by relative wealth derived from agriculture, in pursuit of opportunities in urban areas. However, despite the potential for improved livelihoods in the rural communities, several youths encounter challenges such as limited access to basic services, inadequate housing, and job insecurity, leading to a situation where they exchange rural wealth for urban scarcity. Thus, the decision to abandon rural wealth for urban scarcity involves a complex interplay of socio-economic, cultural, and environmental factors. Literature is replete with issues such as economic factors, including dwindling agricultural productivity, lack of employment opportunities, and income disparities between rural and urban areas, often serve as push factors driving individuals to migrate. Additionally, the allure of urban amenities such as better healthcare, education, and access to markets acts as a pull factor, enticing rural dwellers to seek a better quality of life in urban centres. However, the reality of urban life often falls short of expectations, with youths facing several challenges. While existing literature has documented the patterns and trends of rural-urban migration in Nigeria, there remains a gap in understanding the critical discourse surrounding this phenomenon, particularly in the context of Southwestern Nigeria. This study seeks to fill this gap by conducting a comprehensive analysis of youth's orientation, potential awareness, predisposing factors driving rural-urban migration in the geopolitical zone

Research objectives

This study critically examines the underlying concerns regarding youths' abandoning wealth for scarcity while considering youth's orientation of rural-urban migration in Southwestern Nigeria. The study tends to:

- i. know the rating of youths' orientation towards rural-urban migration.
- ii. examine critical factors predisposing youths to rural-urban migration.

- iii. ascertain the level of youth's awareness of potentials available rural communities.
- iv. investigate effects of youth's rural-urban migration on both the source and destination communities.
- v. proffer plausible control measures to curb rural-urban migration.

Methodology

The study adopted mixed methods research design. Population comprised all youths in Southwestern Nigeria. The multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted. From each of the states, simple random sampling was used to select three Local Government Areas (LGAs) each. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 35 participants from each of the LGAs making a total of 315 participants. The participants were purposively selected based on some criteria which are - he/she must have migrated to current location, must be within the age range of 30 and 49 years old; must be willing to participate in the study. Questionnaire on Youths Perspective to Rural-urban Migration, which was self-designed was used to measure youths' orientation as well as factors predisposing youths to rural-urban migration. It has a reliability coefficient of $r = 0.78$. The quantitative data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of means and standard deviation. Also, the qualitative aspect of the research was carried out through In-depth interviews which were conducted with key participants (two per LGA) on youth's awareness of potentials available rural communities; effects of youths' rural-urban migration on both the source and destination communities as well as critical control measures to curb rural-urban migration. Data collected were thematically analysed.

Findings

Research question 1: What is the rating of youths' orientation towards rural-urban migration?

Table 1: Mean Response of Youths' Orientation Towards Rural-Urban Migration

S/No.	Items	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{x}	Std.
1	I feel a strong sense of attachment to my rural community.	28 7.2	46 11.9	175 45.1	139 35.8	1.90	.871
2	I am interested in exploring opportunities for work or education in urban areas.	14 3.6	192 49.5	166 42.5	16 4.1	2.53	.636
3	I believe that urban areas offer better career prospects compared to rural areas.	261 67.3	47 12.1	46 11.9	34 8.8	2.62	.691
4	I value the close-knit relationships and community spirit found in rural areas.	98 25.3	200 51.5	76 19.6	14 3.6	2.98	.771
5	I am willing to consider relocating to an urban area if it means better access to healthcare and education.	137 35.3	150 38.7	82 21.1	19 4.9	3.04	.872
6	I am hesitant to leave my hometown and move to a city.	85 21.9	83 21.4	130 33.5	90 23.2	2.42	1.072
7	I see rural areas as offering a more peaceful and less stressful lifestyle compared to urban areas.	104 26.8	203 52.3	60 15.5	21 5.4	3.01	.800
8	I perceive urban areas as more dynamic and offering greater opportunities for personal growth.	118 30.4	159 41.0	82 21.1	29 7.5	2.94	.902
9	I am concerned about the high cost of living in urban areas compared to rural areas.	121 31.2	204 52.6	50 12.9	13 3.4	3.12	.750
10	I am attracted to the idea of experiencing the diversity and excitement of urban life.	90 23.2	162 41.8	115 29.6	21 5.4	2.83	.847
11	I believe that rural areas provide a stronger sense of belonging and community.	114 29.4	163 42.0	81 20.0	30 7.7	2.93	.899
12	I am open to the idea of rural-	74	103	143	68	2.47	.992

	urban migration if it means better access to job opportunities.	19.1	26.5	36.9	17.5		
13	I worry about losing touch with my cultural heritage if I move to an urban area.	57 14.7	115 29.6	118 30.4	98 25.3	2.34	1.013
14	I see urban areas as offering better access to amenities such as shopping malls and entertainment venues.	105 27.1	189 48.7	74 19.1	20 5.2	2.98	.818
15	I feel a sense of nostalgia when I think about leaving my rural hometown.	82 21.1	114 29.4	111 28.6	81 20.9	2.51	1.045
16	I am excited about the possibility of meeting new people and making new friends in an urban environment.	94 24.2	127 32.7	125 32.2	42 10.8	2.70	.955
17	I worry about facing discrimination or prejudice as a rural migrant in an urban area.	74 19.1	98 25.3	122 31.4	94 24.2	2.39	1.052
18	I am drawn to the idea of living independently and making my own way in a new city.	57 14.7	67 17.3	136 35.1	128 33	2.14	1.036
19	I believe that urban areas offer better educational opportunities for career advancement.	112 28.9	98 25.3	95 24.5	83 21.4	2.54	1.088
20	I am hesitant to leave behind the natural beauty and tranquility of rural landscapes	55 14.2	71 18.3	142 36.6	120 30.9	2.16	1.018
Weighted Average: 2.63. Threshold: 2.5							

Table 1 revealed the mean response of youths' orientation towards rural-urban migration. It has a weighted average of 2.63 as against the threshold of 2.5. By implication, youths have positive orientation towards rural-urban migration.

Research question 2: Mean Response of Factors Predisposing Youths to Rural-urban Migration?

Table 2: Mean Response of Factors Predisposing Youths to Rural-urban Migration

S/No.	Items	5	4	3	2	1	\bar{x}	Std.	P
1	Lack of job opportunities in rural areas	6 1.5	42 10.8	126 32.5	196 50.5	18 4.6	2.54	.807	23 rd
2	Desire for better education and training available in urban areas	181 46.6	173 44.6	7 1.8	25 6.4	2 0.5	1.70	.835	28 th
3	Influence of peers or family members who have migrated to urban areas	283 72.9	74 19.1	5 1.3	24 6.2	2 0.5	1.42	.839	30 th
4	Access to better healthcare facilities in urban areas	1 0.3	134 34.5	133 34.3	99 25.5	21 5.4	2.99	.911	3 rd
5	Perception of higher wages or income potential in urban jobs	2 0.5	105 27.1	160 41.2	101 26.0	20 5.2	2.92	.868	7 th
6	Limited access to technology and modern amenities in rural areas.	65 16.8	132 34.0	113 29.1	76 19.6	2 0.5	2.53	1.005	24 th
7	Exposure to media portrayals of urban lifestyles and opportunities.	9 2.3	112 28.9	149 38.4	79 20.4	39 10.1	2.93	.992	5 th
8	Pressure to support family financially, which is easier in urban areas.	2 0.5	100 25.8	135 34.8	102 26.3	49 12.6	2.75	.994	15 th
9	Lack of infrastructure development in rural areas.	5 1.3	157 40.5	122 31.4	79 20.4	25 6.4	3.10	.954	1 st
10	Pursuit of personal	3	122	122	117	24	2.90	.942	8 th

	aspirations and career goals only achievable in urban settings.	0.8	31.4	31.4	30.2	6.2			
11	Limited social and recreational opportunities in rural communities.	1 0.3	124 32.0	135 34.8	93 24.0	35 9.0	2.90	.961	9 th
12	Desire for greater cultural diversity and exposure in urban environments.	4 1.0	68 17.5	111 28.6	136 35.1	69 17.8	2.49	1.010	26 th
13	Availability of higher education institutions and vocational training programs in urban areas.	3 0.8	86 22.2	120 30.9	130 33.5	49 12.6	2.65	.986	17 th
14	Perceived lack of upward mobility and economic advancement in rural settings.	1 0.3	136 35.1	120 30.9	98 25.3	33 8.5	2.93	.975	6 th
15	Influence of migration networks and social connections in urban areas.	0 0	108 27.8	114 29.4	108 27.8	58 14.9	2.70	1.033	16 th
16	Attraction to urban amenities such as shopping malls, restaurants, and entertainment venues.	5 1.3	93 24.0	109 28.1	121 31.2	60 15.5	2.64	1.048	19 th
17	Impact of environmental degradation or natural disasters on rural livelihoods.	9 2.3	92 23.7	106 27.3	114 29.4	67 17.3	2.64	1.091	20 th
18	Limited access to transportation and mobility options in rural areas.	30 7.7	76 19.6	101 26.0	131 33.8	50 12.9	2.76	1.141	14 th

19	Perception of urban areas as offering greater personal freedom and independence.	27 7.0	105 27.1	104 26.8	90 23.2	62 16.0	2.86	1.185	11 th
20	Lack of investment in agricultural and rural development projects.	17 4.4	73 18.8	104 26.8	124 31.7	71 18.3	2.59	1.118	21 st
21	Exposure to employment opportunities in urban industries such as manufacturing, services, and technology.	17 4.4	81 20.9	95 24.5	116 29.9	79 20.4	2.59	1.155	22 nd
22	Desire for access to a wider range of consumer goods and services.	23 5.0	37 9.5	115 29.6	207 53.4	6 1.5	2.65	.898	18 th
23	Perception of urban areas as offering better housing and living conditions.	21 5.4	0 0	23 5.9	181 46.6	163 42.0	1.86	1.062	27 th
24	Influence of government policies or incentives promoting urbanization and industrialization.	50 12.9	0 0	0 0	50 12.9	288 74.2	1.64	1.334	29 th
25	Lack of support for entrepreneurship and small business development in rural areas.	21 5.4	113 29.1	141 36.3	96 24.7	17 4.4	3.06	.964	2 nd
26	Pressure to escape from social or cultural constraints present in rural communities.	2 0.5	95 24.5	164 42.3	111 28.6	16 4.1	2.89	.840	10 th
27	Perception of urban areas as centers of	21 5.4	78 20.1	77 19.8	115 29.6	97 25.0	2.51	1.217	24 th

	innovation and creativity.								
28	Influence of educational and career aspirations incompatible with rural living.	30.8	86.22.2	169.43.6	100.25.8	30.7.7	2.82	.889	12 th
29	Desire for better public services such as sanitation, electricity, and water supply.	215.4	94.24.2	148.38.1	92.23.7	33.8.5	2.94	1.018	4 th
30	Perception of urban areas as offering greater social and professional networking opportunities.	71.8	97.25.0	150.38.7	89.22.9	45.11.6	2.82	.994	13 th
Weighted Average: 2.64 Threshold: 2.5									

Table 2 revealed the mean response of factors predisposing youths to rural-urban migration. *"Lack of infrastructure development in rural areas"*; *"Lack of support for entrepreneurship and small business development in rural areas"*, *"Access to better healthcare facilities in urban areas"* were ranked the first, second and third factors driving rural and urban migration among youths in south western Nigeria. By implication, factors predisposing people, especially, youths to rural urban migration are those bothering on infrastructural faculties, support system for small and medium scales as well as healthcare facilities. It also means, there availability may likely reduce rural and urban drifts.

Thematic Analysis for the Qualitative Aspect

Research question 3: What is youth's awareness of potentials available in rural communities?

The qualitative analysis carried out revealed that the level of awareness of potentials in rural areas is poor. This is because several of those who migrate are looking at the largess in the global space which are easily found in concentrated areas of the society. In the same vein, it was

discovered that youths' level of awareness varied widely and was influenced by several factors such as education, communication infrastructure, government initiatives, and community engagement. However, it is discovered that several people are not fully aware of the potentials in the rural communities. The following are the excerpts from the interview conducted; *"Sorry sir, what potentials are you talking about. Farming or poultry business. This is because aside farming, I do not see any meaningful things to enjoy in the area. I stayed in the village for several years and you expect me to graduate and still be living there. No"* (Participant_A_54_F_21/10/2023). *"I do not see any potential there. Except I want to create a small-scale business of buying and selling. However, who will buy massive from me in the village. Even if I engage in entrepreneurship activities, the thinking is very low. Hence, the gains in the community maybe the farming and its produces which can be transported to the city in commercial quantity."* (Participant_B_44_M_22/10/2023). *"To some extent, there are potentials but not as available as the cities. Here, there is security, peace of mind but low economy buoyancy. So, if you equate it, one will discover that potentials lie in the urban centres like Lagos, Port-harcourt, Abuja and several areas."* (Participant_C_41_F_22/10/2023). *"The rural life is not the life I want to live. I just want to have the opportunity of a modern lifestyle. Enjoying the benefits attached to city lifestyles. There are several government presences in virtually all the capital cities. Can one compare places like Igbo-Oloyin, Kolobo, Oritamerin even in Ibadan to places like Jericho, Ring Road and several other places"* (Participant_D_32_M_19/10/2023). *"In urban centres, one would see skyscrapers, companies, flyovers, four lane road, averagely constant electricity, and other infrastructural facilities of the urban life"* (Participant_E_54_M_22/10/2023). *"Ambiance of an urban centre is second to none"* (Participant_F_364_F_20/10/2023). *"* (Participant_G_33_M_21/10/2023). From the submission above, it can be said that several people, especially youths are not aware of the prospect in the rural area. This is contributing to high migration rate into capital cities in southwestern Nigeria.

Research question 4: What are the effects of youths' rural-urban migration on both the source and destination communities?

The qualitative analysis carried out revealed that there are two sides to the effects rural-urban migration on the rural communities as well as the urban centres. It is said that on urban centres, there is persistent decline in the population of the host communities, even the available population would comprise of aged men and women, people are running away from farming, there is usually a strain on the healthcare, several families would depend on remittance from migrated families, while for urban centres, there is pressure on population, infrastructural facilities, job opportunities and several others. The following are the excerpts from the interview conducted; *"It has both negative and positive effects on the people as well as the socio-economic activities of both the host and receiving environments."* (Participant_A_54_F_21/10/2023). *"The departure of young, skilled workers can lead to a shortage of labour in key sectors such as agriculture, education, and healthcare"* (Participant_C_41_F_22/10/2023). Another participant stated that *"youth migration can disrupt social structures and traditions, potentially leading to the erosion of community cohesion and cultural practices. Also, youths may face social exclusion, discrimination, and difficulties in accessing education, healthcare, and other services, leading to social tensions."* (Participant_D_32_M_19/10/2023). A participant who had stayed in Ibadan for over ten years remarked that *"Rapid urbanization can strain infrastructure such as housing, transportation, water, and sanitation systems, leading to congestion and service deficits"* (Participant_E_54_M_22/10/2023). It is also said that *"Urbanization can exacerbate environmental issues such as pollution, deforestation, and loss of biodiversity, affecting both urban and rural areas."* (Participant_F_364_F_20/10/2023). In the same vein, a participant remarked that *"Loss of labour can result in decreased productivity and economic stagnation, particularly in areas heavily reliant on agriculture."* (Participant_G_33_M_21/10/2023). From the above, it can be deduced that there are several remote and immediate factors affecting rural urban drift in southwestern Nigeria.

Research question 5: What are critical control measures to curb rural-urban migration? The qualitative analysis carried out revealed the following as control measures to prevent rural-urban drift. The factors were teased out of the interview conducted with the selected participants; addressing rural-urban migration involves implementing a combination of strategies to create balanced development and improve living conditions in rural areas. Some solutions include: policies and programme to address the development of the rural environment, technological innovation in agriculture, opportunities for job and wealth creation, skillset development plans, provision of credit facilities for small and medium scale businesses, access to digital life and engagement, schooling opportunities, bringing government closers to the people at the grassroot, health care facilities, promoting agri-tourism activities, Promoting eco-friendly environment, creation of more space, rural renewal, conservation of the environment, creating opportunities for sustainable lifestyle. There is need for collaborative efforts involving government bodies, NGOs, local communities, and private sectors are crucial for implementing and sustaining these solutions. The goal is to create well-rounded development opportunities that reduce the pull factors drawing people away from rural areas. The following are the excerpts from the interview conducted; *“The fact that the environment can be made conducive for living is sufficient for addressing the problem of rural-urban drift. The moment people can benefit from the environment. They have no option than to stay. I know of several people who are in a rural area and are making cool cash for living. The cost of living was very low” (Participant_A_54_F_21/10/2023).* *“Preserving the environment for the use of all by government and relevant agencies is also a pointer to the fact that people may want to reside in the local area. I am wondering if there can be basic amenities like healthcare, pipe borne water, good road network, people especially youths may want to stay.” (Participant_B_44_M_22/10/2023).* *“It is very essential that there is collaborative efforts involving government bodies, NGOs, local communities, and private sectors.” (Participant_C_41_F_22/10/2023).* *“Since most rural areas are agrarian society, there is need to promote agri-tourism activities. This will allow residents to enjoy the perceived benefits of the rural world. Thus, government agencies, parastatals and ministries must ensure that rural communities are habitable for people*

in terms of electrification, road networking, urban renewal and several others.” (Participant_D_32_M_19/10/2023). “The moment the opportunities in capital cities can be provided for people within the rural area. They will want to stay. Thus, these opportunities are jobs and wealth creation, skillset development plans and security. The absence of some of these may discourage residents from staying” (Participant_E_54_M_22/10/2023). “As for me, bringing the technological innovation into agriculture which virtually the only economic arrangement in the rural area” (Participant_F_364_F_20/10/2023). “Rural-urban drift is a social issue or challenge that require urgent critical solutions and then people can begin to reside in the rural area or minimize the interest in migration” (Participant_G_33_M_21/10/2023). From the above, it can be deduced that several concerted efforts must be put in place to address the issue of rural urban migration as well as open people to the prospect and opportunities in the rural areas especially in southwestern Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

Youth Orientation of Rural-Urban Migration

The findings revealed that youth had positive orientation of rural-urban migration. This implies that several youths have full understanding of rural-urban migration in Southwestern Nigeria. The finding was in line with the works of De Haas (2008) but at variance with the works of Goldin, Cameron and Balarajan (2011) whose submission explained that youths are often driven by aspirations for better opportunities in urban areas. This aspiration is fueled by perceptions of urban centres as hubs of economic activity, offering access to education, employment, and social mobility. The allure of urban amenities such as better healthcare facilities, educational institutions, and entertainment options also played a significant role in shaping youths' migration orientation. This was also supported by Guild (2010) and Haugen (2012). It is explained that economic considerations emerged as a central factor influencing youths' orientation towards rural-urban migration. Limited job prospects and income disparities in rural areas compel many youths to seek employment opportunities in urban centres, where they perceive greater earning potential and financial stability. Additionally, the promise of higher wages and access to formal employment sectors

motivated youths to migrate in search of economic advancement. This implies that they are fully educated about rural-urban migration and its associated concerns.

Factors Predisposing Youths to Rural-Urban Migration

The result revealed that the lack of infrastructure development in rural areas, lack of, support system and healthcare were rated as factors predisposing rural urban migration. This implies that the absence of infrastructural facilities, healthcare, and support system for both social and economic survival in the rural community are core reasons why several youths engage in rural-rural migration. It is in line with the works of Nwalutu (2016); Omoniyi, Ajitoni and Amosun (2021); National Bureau of Statistics (2010); Goldin, Cameron and Balarajan (2011) but at variance with the study of Brenner, Forin and Frouws (2018). The submission of the previous scholars found that the availability of essential infrastructure and basic services, or the lack thereof, also predisposes youths to rural-urban migration. Many rural areas suffer from inadequate infrastructure, including limited access to healthcare facilities, educational institutions, transportation networks, and reliable utilities. The perception of better infrastructure and improved quality of life in urban areas drives youths to migrate in search of access to essential services and amenities that are lacking in their rural communities. In the same vein, the pursuit of educational opportunities serves as a significant predisposing factor influencing youths' migration decisions. Several youths perceive urban areas as offering better educational facilities, including access to higher education institutions, vocational training centres, and educational resources. There is also a place of the desire to pursue advanced education, acquire specialized skills, and enhance their career prospects drives youths to migrate to urban centres where they believe they can access quality education and training opportunities not available in rural areas.

Awareness of Potentials in Rural Areas

Findings revealed that many youths are not awareness of potentials in rural areas. This implies that young people are driven about the allure of urban opportunities even when there are potentials that they can tap into. The finding is in line with Akinyemi & Ikuteyijo (2009) whose results explained that several of these youth people cannot identify

problems to be addressed in adding value to the society. Thus, the lack of these will make the rural area not to meet up with their established standards. The findings from Ojeme (2016) and Mberu & Mutua (2014) which are not in tandem with the submissions of Brenner, Forin and Frouws (2018) and Nwalutu (2016) explain that that people are aware of some of the benefits of residing in the rural area but are not willing to waste time in attaining their planned objectives. Some studies like Mberu and Mutua (2014) agreed with the finding of the study which explained that virtually young people who are privileged to be born in rural areas are not fully aware of how to make meaning of the potentials in the rural areas. The study by Omoniyi, Ajitoni and Amosun (2021) is in line with the submission of the study but was at variance with that of Adedokun and Karzanova (2019).

Effects of rural-urban migration on both the source and destination communities

The result revealed that there are positive and negative effects of rural urban migration. By implication, it is both a blessing and disguise. This is because, an exodus movement of some able people to a new environment will add value as well as new challenge to the new environment and vice versa. It is in line with the works of National Bureau of Statistics (2010); World Poverty Clock (2018) and Ojeme (2016). Davitti and Ursu (2018); Ikuteyijo (2018); Goldin, Cameron and Balarajan (2011). As part of these effects, these studies discovered that even at host communities, there is high living costs, inadequate housing and competition for limited resources often confront youths, challenging their initial perceptions of urban prosperity. Moreover, the loss of social support networks and cultural ties can contribute to feelings of isolation and dislocation among migrant youths.

Critical Control Measures to Rural-Urban Drift

The result revealed critical control measures such as workable policies and programme, promoting eco-friendly environment, technological innovation in agriculture, skillset development plans, provision of credit facilities for small and medium scale businesses, access to digital life and engagement, health care facilities, rural renewal, conservation of the environment among others to ameliorate youth's rural-urban migration as well as open their sight to the abundant opportunities in

the rural communities. This was in line with the works of Adedokun and Karzanova (2019), Brenner, Forin and Frouws (2018); Haugen, (2012), Goldin, Cameron and Balarajan (2011) whose submissions explain that there is need for critical concerns lay emphasis on policies aimed at promoting rural development, creating job opportunities, and enhancing the socio-economic well-being of rural youths can contribute to reducing the pressure for migration and fostering sustainable development in both rural and urban areas.

Conclusion

Thus, effectively making these contributions means avoiding the exploitative patterns of the past and adopting a new approach to wealth creation. Hence, to respond to today's historic opportunities in a way that builds wealth and assets rooted in rural places, rural leaders need new ways of thinking about economic development. The discourse on rural-urban migration in Southwestern Nigeria exposes the intricate dynamics surrounding the decision-making process of individuals as they forsake rural wealth for perceived opportunities in urban settings. This discourse delves into the multifaceted factors influencing migration patterns, including economic disparities, access to education and healthcare, social networks, and cultural perceptions. As rural communities grapple with scarcity and limited prospects, the allure of urban centers becomes increasingly appealing, promising better livelihoods and advancement. However, this migration trend also brings to light the inherent challenges and complexities faced by migrants as they navigate the transition from rural to urban life. Issues such as inadequate infrastructure, housing shortages, employment uncertainties, and cultural adjustments underscore the need for comprehensive policy interventions and support mechanisms to ensure the well-being and integration of migrants into urban communities. Moreover, addressing the root causes of rural impoverishment and fostering sustainable development in both rural and urban areas is essential for achieving long-term resilience and equitable growth. In essence, the critical discourse on rural-urban migration in Southwestern Nigeria calls for a holistic approach that acknowledges the interconnectedness of rural and urban landscapes. By addressing the underlying socioeconomic disparities and promoting inclusive development strategies, policymakers, researchers, and communities

can work together to harness the potential of migration as a driver of positive change while mitigating its adverse impacts on vulnerable populations. Only through collaborative efforts and informed decision-making can Southwestern Nigeria strive towards a more equitable and prosperous future for all its residents, regardless of their geographic location.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made.:

1. There is need for exploring a wealth-creation approach to rural economic development.
2. Critical infrastructural facilities and initiatives should be put in place in the rural areas by government and non-government agencies.
3. There is need for expanding livelihood and wealth opportunities for people in the rural areas.
4. Government at all levels should provide a framework for creating wealth that is rooted in rural regions, including those of persistent poverty.
5. Government should create new paradigms to intentionally connect people, resources, and markets.
6. There is need to encourage both state and non-state actors in driving critical investments that can create multiple forms of wealth.

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