

The Benefits of Women's Migration for Work in Nigeria

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Abstract

This article examined the benefits of women's migration for work in Nigeria, using primary and secondary data in conjunction with a theoretical framework comprising the Ravenstein theory of migration, the theory of planned behaviour and the theory of social stratification. The primary data were obtained via qualitative observations of the identities and economic activities of women migrant workers at different geographical areas in Nigeria, while the secondary data were derived from a systematic review of the literature such as books, journals, and other relevant documents. The primary and secondary data obtained for this article were scrutinized and subjected to content analysis. The main findings comprised the following: women's migration for work in Nigeria occurred in different forms such as rural-rural migration, rural-urban migration, urban-urban migration, urban-rural migration and return migration. Women's migration for work was beneficial to women migrant workers and different categories of persons in different ways. Women migrant workers did not only achieved some levels of autonomy and empowerment but also contributed to socioeconomic development of their communities. The policymakers in Nigeria should recognise and support the creativities and potentials of women migrant workers to promote the socioeconomic development of the rural and urban areas of Nigeria.

Keywords: *Benefits, Internal Migration, Planned Behaviour, Women Migrant Workers*

Introduction

Human migration is the movement of persons from one geographical location to another within a country in the case of internal migration and across countries in the case of international migration. Human migration has contributed to population growth and cultural diversity worldwide. Archaeological evidence shows that human beings have migrated and fully populated the world¹.

Researchers have shown that the incidence of internal migration has outnumbered the incidence of international migration, although migration researchers are increasingly interested in international migrations². The growing number of women who have embarked on international migration in search for employment opportunities is an important aspect of migration studies.

An increase in the incidence of women's migration, which refers to feminization of migration, has become noticeable since the 1950s³. In 1960, there were 35 million women migrants and 40 million men migrants, while in 2000 the number of migrants had increased to 85 million women migrants and 90 million men migrants. The increasing number of women migrants is an important emerging trend in the contemporary migration landscape. However, women's migration for work within a country has received limited attention in the literature on migration studies.

¹ Massey, D. S. 2002. "A Brief History of Human Society: The Origin and Role of Emotion in Social Life." *American Sociological Review* 67(1): 1-29

² Wright, R. and Ellis, M. 2016. "Perspectives on Migration Theory: Geography. In *International Handbook of Migration and Population Distribution*, Edited by Michael J. White, 11-30. Dordrecht: Springer.

³ Lansink, A. 2009. "Migration and Development: The Contribution of Women Migrant Workers to Poverty Alleviation." *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity* 81: 126-136

Despite its interest in promoting the role of migration in development through formulation of policies on migration management in Africa, the African Union has given little or no attention to the issue of internal migration, especially women's migration within an African country. For instance, in its summit on migration and development, the African Union (2006)⁴ only made a passing statement on women's migration.

This is tantamount to painting an incomplete picture of women's migration for work within a country in Africa. Available evidence shows that many women have migrated for work and education across Nigeria and West Africa, but women migrants are vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation, and abuse⁵. Unfortunately, researchers in migration studies largely focus on international migration and men's migration, despite the fact that women constitute half of the global population with a significant growth in the rates of their participation in the labour force and contributions to development^{6;3;7}. Therefore, this article examined the benefits of women's migration for work in Nigeria, with a focus on the following research questions:

- i. What is the structure of women's migration for work in Nigeria?
- ii. Which work do women migrants frequently do in Nigeria?
- iii. Of what benefits is women's migration for work in Nigeria?
- iv. How do women migrant workers give or receive benefits in Nigeria?

⁴ African Union 2006. "African Common Position on Migration and Development." Last modified June 8, 2022. www.africa-union.org

⁵ Celestine, F. (2022). International women's day: Time for gender responsive migration policy. Daily Trust. <https://dailytrust.com/international-womens-day-time-for-gender-responsive-migration-policy>

⁶ Akinwale, A. A. 2019. "Theoretical Analysis of Women's Participation in the Labour Force." MTU Journal of Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Development 1(1): 160-167.

⁷ Ullah, A. A. 2017. "Male Migration and Left-Behind Women: Bane or Boon?" Environment and Urbanisation 8(1): 59-73.

The above-mentioned research questions were addressed through content analysis of primary and secondary data comprising qualitative observations of the identities and economic activities of women migrant workers and systematic review of the literature on issues associated with internal migration in Nigeria. The next sections of this article focused on an overview of internal migration and historical accounts of women's migration in Nigeria. These were followed by a theoretical framework, methods of data collection and analysis, findings, discussions of findings and conclusion, respectively.

An Overview of Internal Migration

Internal migration was predominant for 4.5 million years from the earliest stage of development of human society¹. At the earliest stage of development of human society, human species migrated in groups within Africa in the course of their gathering and hunting activities⁸. Each group of the human species comprised 60-70 individuals including men and women in different productive activities.

Rural-rural migration was predominant at the earliest stage of development of human society. With the emergence of agrarian society, settlements in villages and cities provided a basis for the development of rural-urban migration at different geographical locations in Asia, Africa and elsewhere. Rural in-migration contributed to the emergence of pre-industrial cities in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Rome. Prior to the advent of the first industrial revolution, no more than five percent of any society lived in cities and the total population of a single city never exceeded 1 million¹.

⁸ Brumer, A. 2008. "Gender Relations in Family-Farm Agriculture and Rural-Urban Migration in Brazil." *Latin American Perspective* 35(6): 11-28.

In fact, internal migration has flourished for a longer period¹ compared to international migration, which has become unprecedented since the slave trade era². A longitudinal study of internal migration in the United Kingdom focused on the labour-market outcomes and the material well-being of migrants⁹. Urban-urban migration is more prevalent in Latin America than Asia and Africa¹⁰.

The Nigerian migration history is dominated by instances of rural-rural and rural-urban migration¹¹. Like the cases of rural-rural migration in Nigeria, short term-movement from savanna to forest is a natural adaptation in the climatic zones in West Africa where the slack season and the period of inactivity in the savanna regions correspond to the busy season and the time of peak agricultural demands in the cocoa and coffee regions of the forest zone¹².

Regarding the instances of rural-urban migration, economic opportunities in the cities such as Lagos-Ikeja-Ibadan in the south-west, Kaduna-Kano-Zaria in the north-west, and Aba-Enugu-Port-Harcourt in the south-east and south-south attracted many traders and migrants from rural areas in Nigeria¹³.

In his survey of 2,316 migrant women in Ibadan, Enugu, Lagos, and Kaduna, Makinwa-Adebusoye¹⁴ observed that several factors such as modernization, greater advancement in education and improvements in transportation and communication as well as the economic recession and

⁹ Nowok, B., van Ham, M. and Findlay, A. M. 2013. "Does Migration Make You Happy? A Longitudinal Study of Internal Migration and Subjective Well-Being." *Economy and Space* 45(4): 986-1002.

¹⁰ Haan, A. 2000. "Migrants, Livelihoods, and Rights: The Relevance of Migration in Development Policies." *Social Development Working Paper* 4: 1-50.

¹¹ Campbell, E. K. 2007. "Reflections on Illegal Immigration in Botswana and South Africa." *African Population Studies* 21(2): 23-44.

¹² Berg, N., 1965. "Strategic Planning in Conglomerate Companies." *Harvard Business Review* 43: 79-92.

¹³ International Organisation for Migration. 2015. *National Migration Policy 2015*. Geneva: International Organisation for Migration.

¹⁴ Makinwa-Adebusoye, P. K. 1994. "Women Migrants in Nigeria." *International Sociology* 9(2): 223-236.

structural adjustment measures influenced women's migration in Nigeria in the 1970s and 1980s. Most women migrants with wage employment in the formal sector secured their positions with the help of relatives.

Meagher¹⁵ examined some instances of rural-urban migration and urban-urban migration by showing that the guilds of garments designers and shoemakers in Aba, south-east Nigeria attracted men and women migrants from different parts of Nigeria. She also noted that the Mbaise migrants from Imo state specialised in shoes manufacturing in Aba due to its low capital outlay and relatively simple skills requirements. Moreover, Meagher (2007)¹⁶ noted that a guild of weavers in Ilorin, a popular town in the north-central Nigeria, attracted migrants from different ethnic groups, including the Yoruba, Hausa, Nupe, Fulani, and Igbira. The key product of the guild of weavers in Ilorin is a local fabric known as '*Aso-oke*', which has been prestigious since the pre-colonial era.

Adewale¹⁷ investigated the socio-economic determinants of urban-rural migration in Nigeria with a focus on the situation in Oyo State of Nigeria. Following his interviews with 160 migrants in rural areas of Oyo state of Nigeria, Adewale¹⁷ discovered that most of the respondents left the urban centres for the rural areas because of their inability to secure jobs in the towns, transfer to rural areas in their places of work, retirement and high cost of living in the urban centres. Adewale¹⁷ suggested that government should encourage urban-rural migration to enhance rural development in Nigeria.

¹⁵ Meagher, K. 2004. "Identity Economics: Informal Manufacturing and Social Networks in Southeastern Nigeria." D.Phil Thesis. University of Oxford.

¹⁶ Meagher, K. 2007. "Manufacturing Disorder: Liberalization, Informal Enterprise and Economic 'Ungovernance' in African Small Firm Clusters." *Development and Change* 38(3), 473-503.

¹⁷ Adewale, J. G. 2005. "Socio-economic Factors Associated with Urban-Rural Migration in Nigeria: A Case Study of Oyo State, Nigeria." *Journal of Human Ecology* 17(1): 13-16.

A large number of the Nigerian population has participated in internal migration. The Internal Migration Survey, which the National Population Commission (NPC) conducted in 2010, revealed that 23 percent of the sampled populations of Nigerians were internal migrants, 2 percent were returned migrants, and 75 percent were non-migrants¹⁸. People from the south-south, south-east, and south-west regions of Nigeria, including Abia, Akwa Ibom, Anambra, Delta, Edo, Ekiti, Enugu, Ondo, and Oyo, with the exception of Kogi and Kwara states, tend to migrate more than those from the north-central, north-east and north-west regions of Nigeria¹⁸.

Compared with the situations in other regions of Nigeria, with the exception of Lagos, people in the north-central Nigeria received more migrants, followed by people in the south-south Nigeria, due respectively to the emergence of Abuja as a federal capital city and the economic pull and attraction in the oil and gas producing areas of the Niger Delta¹⁸. In the light of the foregoing, it is not in doubt that only few studies focused on analysis of women's migration within Nigeria.

Historical Accounts of Women's Migration in Nigeria

The issue of women's migration in Nigeria arises from the histories of the various ethnic groups in Nigeria. For instance, women's migration in Yorubaland resulted in the emergence of some settlements such as Ondo and Ishan. The Ondo are descendants of Oduduwa ancestry, through a queen and her twins, who migrated from Oyo and Ile-Ife to a new settlement, which evolved into the Ondo kingdom, where the female twin called Pupuru became the first Osemawe of the Ondo kingdom and ruled from 1516 to 1530¹⁹.

¹⁸ Rigaud, K. K. de Sherbinin, A. Jones, B. Abu-Ata, N. E. and Adamo, S. 2021. *Groundswell Africa: A Deep Dive into Internal Climate Migration in Nigeria*. Washington: The World Bank.

¹⁹ Obinta, R. F. 2008. "Intergroup Relations among the Ondo-Speaking People Since the Per-Colonial Times", In *Culture and Society in Nigeria Popular Cultures, Language and Intergroup Relations*, Edited by T.

Subsequently, Ondo women were discouraged from aspiring to the throne due to perceived role conflicts between public leadership and domestic responsibilities. A brief illustration of women's power in Ondo kingdom is presented as follows:

Ondo briefly operated a matrilineal political system from 1516 to 1530 under the matrilineal rulership of Pupupu, the first monarch, who was said to be a princess from Oyo. The political system later changed to patrilineal as from 1530 following the emergence of Airo, the first male Osemawe and the eldest son of Pupupu.

Consistent with the abovementioned illustration, Nwaokoro²⁰ observed that the dynastic history of Ondo began in 1516 with the ascendancy of Pupupu, a daughter of Alaafin Oluaso of Oyo. She was a lead figure among the migrants, who settled in Ondo. This marked the beginning of women's power in Ondo traditional politics. In fact, a new office headed by Lobun, who must be a descendant of Pupupu, was established to protect women's power in the political system of the Ondo kingdom. Lobun is the only person traditionally accepted to crown the king.

Also, women's migration can be observed in the historical accounts of the Hausa ethnic group in Nigeria. Bayajidda, who was the founder of Hausaland, migrated from Borno in the company of his wife called Magira and they both settled at Biram and their son became the first king of Biram, while Bayajidda later moved to Daura, where he married another woman called Daurama, the Queen of Daura²¹.

²⁰ Nwaokoro, T. T. 2013. "Women Education and Social Change in Ondo, Southwestern Nigeria, 1875-2008." PhD Thesis, Department of History, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

²¹ Aminu, R. W. 2019. "A History of Hausa Settler Community in Akwanga Area, 1800-2011." PhD Thesis, Benue State University.

The six grandchildren of the Queen of Daura and Bayajidda became the paramount political leaders at different geographical locations, namely: Daura, Katsina, Kaduna, Gobir, Kano, and Rano, respectively. The above-mentioned kingdoms founded by the legitimate descendants of Bayajidda are known as the seven Hausa states called Hausa Bakwai, while the descendants of Bayajidda and his concubine became the first leaders of the following Hausa states called Banza Bakwai: Zamfara, Nupe, Gwari, Yauri, Katanga, Kebbi and Jukun²¹

Hausa women migrated for marriage and religious purpose such as participation in Bori cult although the advent of Islam has placed some restrictions on their movement²². Despite the advent of Islam, which encourages seclusion of women, Hausa women have migrated to different geographical areas for different reasons such as marriage, religious practice and economic considerations. In his description of the incidence of Hausa women's migration in Nigeria, Pittin²³ noted thus:

One of the ancient walled cities of Hausa land, Katsina has long attracted travelers. From the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Katsina was a terminus of the trans-Saharan caravan trade and by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had reached the height of its prosperity and fame as a commercial and political centre, and as a centre of Islamic learning and culture. Unfortunately, we have no data concerning the presence or activities of migrant women. Indeed, it is only in the twentieth century, when Katsina has become a shadow of its former self, that we can properly trace the movement of migrant women into the city.

²² Sambo, Z. S. and Gold, K. L. 2008. : Breaking Cultural Barriers: The Roles of the Hausa Women in Contemporary Politics and the Economy in Ilorin City." In Culture and Society in Nigeria Popular Cultures, Language and Intergroup Relations., Edited by Tunde Babawale and Olukoya Ogen, 146-164., Lagos: Concept Publications Limited.

²³ Pittin, R. 1984. "Migration of Women in Nigeria: The Hausa Case." The International Migration Review 18(4): 1293-1314.

It is noteworthy that despite the Islamic practice of seclusion of women, many women migrants exist in Hausa land, including the Hausa women who migrated to cities in the company of their husbands and non-Hausa women migrants in northern Nigeria. The majority of the women migrants in northern Nigeria were in the 10-25 years age bracket²³. The practice of sex work called *karuwanci* is a major economic activity among women migrants in northern Nigeria. Also, other major economic activities among the women migrants in northern Nigeria include production/sale of groundnut oil/groundnut cake, and production/sale of guinea corn/corn starch that is consumed in its final form as *pap*²¹.

Moreover, some instances of women's migration can be observed in the history of migration among the Igbo people of eastern Nigeria. The foremost Igbo people, who migrated within the Igboland comprised the Abakaliki people, the Nkwere people, the Aro people, the Awka people, and people from other communities in Igboland²⁴. Besides engaging in farming, the traditional Igbo people practiced various economic activities such as hunting, fishing and other crafts.

The abovementioned economic activities and the quest for better economic opportunities necessitated the migration of Igbo people to various communities within and outside Igboland²⁵. Available evidence linking hostile environment to migration of the Igbo people shows that the environment of the Igbo people was economically unfriendly, while the landmass was small in relation to the population²⁶.

²⁴ Okoro, K. 2022. "Igbo: A Conventional or a Mobile Nation? Interrogating the Igbo People's Migration Dexterity." *Asian Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Studies* 5(1): 1-12.

²⁵ Korieh, C. J. 2010. *The Land Has Changed: History, Society and Gender in Colonial Eastern Nigeria*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press.

²⁶ Ojukwu, C. 2009. Globalization, Migration and Philosophy of in-ward-Looking: The Contemporary Igbo Nation in Perspective." *African Journal of Political Science and International Relation* 3(3): 84-91.

Thus, the Igbo people migrated from their origins to various communities within and outside Igboland. In fact, the Igbo people have traced their origin through migration from Israel to eastern Nigeria²⁷. An account of the Igbo women's migration since the pre-colonial era shows that Igbo women primarily migrated from rural areas to rural areas for agriculture²⁸.

The Igbo women's migration shifted from rural-rural migration to rural-urban migration during the colonial era and the incidence of women's migration from Igbo land became unprecedented during the Civil War of 1967-1970^{29;30}. Furthermore, Igbo women are known for their participation in urban-rural migration for "August Meeting" or "Christmas and New Year Celebrations", which are major cultural events in eastern Nigeria.

Another historical account of women's migration in Nigeria can be observed in the Sabongari system, a colonial policy of residential segregation. Sabongari migrants' communities emerged in northern Nigeria in 1912, whereas its existence in southwestern Nigeria commenced in 1916³¹. Men and women migrants from southern parts of Nigeria largely lived in Sabongari in northern Nigeria, while men and women migrants from northern parts of Nigeria largely lived in Tudun Wada in northern Nigeria.

²⁷ Madubuike, S. C. 2009. "Endangered Language and Identity: The Case of Igbo People in Ibadan." *Journal of Black and African Arts and Civilisation* 3(1): 183-197.

²⁸ Chukwu, G. 2005. *Women and Economic Transformation in Southeastern Nigeria (1900-1960)*. New York: Routledge

²⁹ Mgbeafulu, M. C. 2003. *Migration and the Economy: Igbo Migrants and the Nigerian Economy (1900-1975)*. New York: Iuniverse.

³⁰ Smith, D. J. 2004. "Burials and Belonging in Nigeria: Rural-Urban Relations and Social Inequality in a Contemporary African Ritual." *American Anthropologist* 106(3): 569-579.

³¹ Odoemene, A. 2008. "The Contexts of Colonialism and Ethnicity in Indigene-Settler Relations: Comparative Historical Evidence from Social (Dis)Order in Two Nigerian Cities." In *Society, State and Identity in African History*, Edited by Bahum Sewde, 231-256., Addis Ababa: Forum for Social Studies.

Also, men and women migrants from northern parts of Nigeria largely lived in Sabo communities in south-west Nigeria, including Ibadan, Ogbomoso, Oyo, Sagamu, Abeokuta, Ijebu-Ode, and Lagos³². Men and women migrants in Sabo communities largely engage in informal economic activities.

Theoretical Framework

The benefits of women's migration for work in Nigeria can be examined from different perspectives such as demographic, psychological and sociological perspectives, with a focus on the Ravenstein theory of migration, the theory of planned behaviour and the theory of social stratification. The main ideas in the Ravenstein theory of migration are presented in Figure 1 to show the prominence of women's participation in internal migration.

Ravenstein's³³ theory of migration shows that most migrants, especially women only move across short distances. Ravenstein theory of migration also stipulates that the search for better economic opportunities is the primary reason for migration. In the light of his observations of the migratory movement in Europe and North America, Ravenstein³⁴ noted that women predominated among the migrants who move across short distances. Women constituted a majority of the migrants who settled in Berlin. Also, women constituted a majority of the migrants who settled in other parts of Germany.

³² Olaniyi, R. 2006. "Transformation of the Sabon Gari." In *Nigeria's Urban History Past and Present*, Edited by Hakeem Ibikunle Tijani, 133-144. New York: University Press of America.

³³ Ravenstein, E. G. 1885. "The Laws of Migration." *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, 48(2): 167-235.

³⁴ Ravenstein, E. G. 1889. "The Laws of Migration." *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 52(2): 241-305.

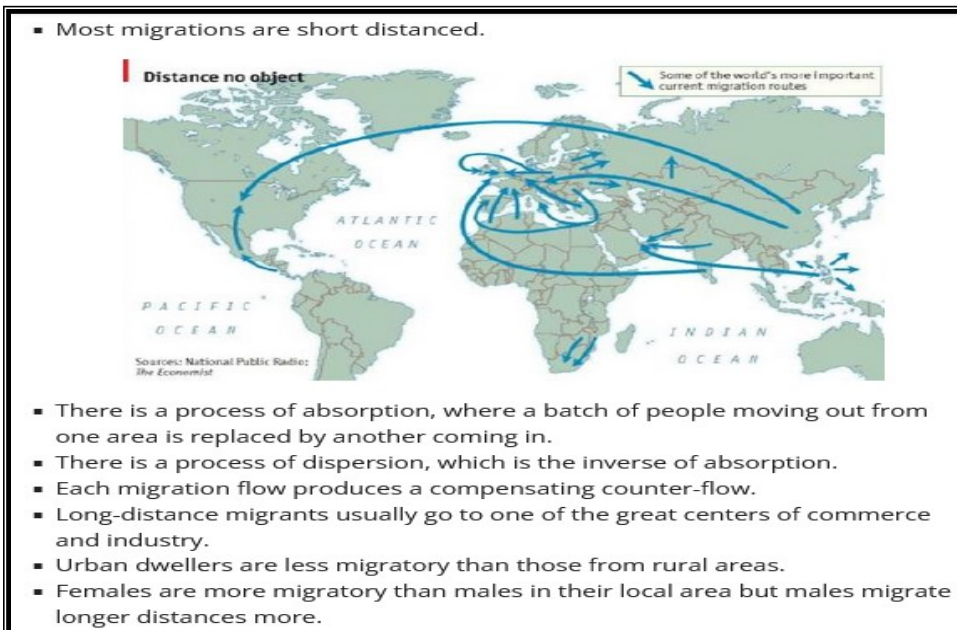


Figure 1 Ravenstein Theory of Migration

Source: Kunaka³⁵

The main ideas in the Ravenstein theory of migration are somewhat consistent with the outcome of the internal migration survey, which the National Population Commission conducted in 2010. Table 1 shows the gender distribution of the internal migrants in Nigeria where women migrants outnumbered men migrants in seven states including Abia, Adamawa, Bayelsa, Cross River, Kano, Kwara, and Lagos. This trend shows the need for a close observation of the benefits of women’s migration for work in Nigeria.

³⁵ Kunaka, D. 2020. “Ravenstein’s 10 Laws of Migration, Applicability and Criticism.” Last modified June 8, 2022. <https://thegeoroom.co.zw/population-studies/ravensteins-10-laws-of-migration-applicability-criticism/>

Table 1: The Migrant Population by State and Gender in Nigeria

State of Current Residence	Men (%)	Women (%)	Total Number
Abuja (FCT)	52.9	47.1	295
Abia	45.2	54.8	281
Adamawa	38.0	62.0	300
Anambra	52.0	48.0	300
Bayelsa	45.1	54.9	319
Cross River	44.6	55.4	289
Gombe	51.7	48.3	325
Kaduna	51.3	48.7	345
Kano	45.6	54.4	294
Kwara	44.5	55.5	330
Lagos	44.3	55.7	300
Oyo	56.7	43.3	300

Source: Extracted from the National Population Commission (2010)³⁶

In addition to the Ravenstein theory of migration, the theory of planned behaviour was included in the theoretical framework to demonstrate the influence of some important factors such as attitudes, norms and behaviour in women's migration for work in Nigeria. Figure 2 shows the main ideas in the theory of planned behaviour.

³⁶ National Population Commission. 2010. Internal Migration Survey in Nigeria 2010. Geneva: International Organisation for Migration.

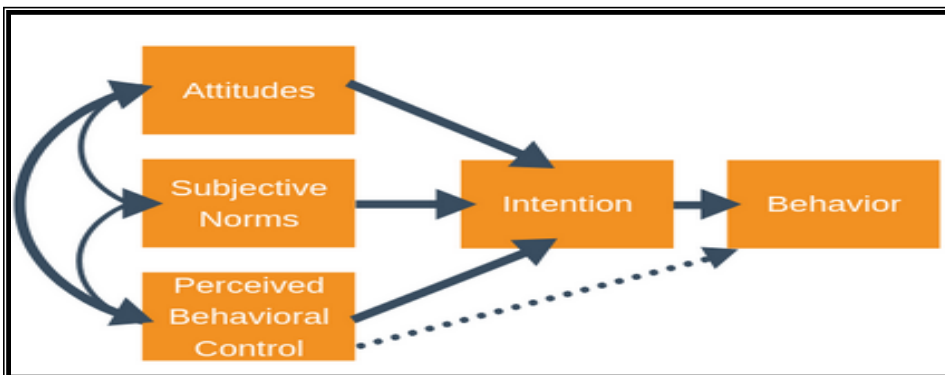


Figure 2 Theory of Planned Behaviour

Source: Adapted from Ajzen³⁷

In his theory of planned behaviour, Ajzen (1991)³⁷ defined attitude toward a behavior as the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of the behavior, thereby suggesting that a positive attitude to a specific behavior can determine an intention to perform the behavior³⁸. The subjective norms in the theory of planned behaviour are the perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform a given behavior. The subjective norms may comprise opinions of the significant others such as spouse, relatives, friends, religious leaders, and members of the community. The subjective norms can significantly contribute to the incidence of women's migration for work if such norms focused on the benefits of women's migration for work.

The perceived behavioral control in the theory of planned behaviour refers to the perceived ease or difficulty of performing a given behavior. The perceived behavioral controls can contribute to the incidence of women's migration for work if women demonstrate their ability to seek employment opportunities in the labour market outside their places of origin.

³⁷ Ajzen, I. 1991. "The Theory of Planned Behavior." *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 50(2): 179-211.

³⁸ Abdullah, M. I., Sarfraz, M., Arif, A. and Azam, A. 2018. "An Extension of the Theory of Planned Behaviour towards Brand Equity and Premium Price." *Polish Journal of Management Studies* 18(1): 20-32.

However, the dispositions of women towards migration in search of work or economic opportunities in the labour market cannot be understood independently of the socio-cultural conditions affecting women in a given society³⁹. Therefore, the theory of social stratification was included in the theoretical framework to explain the circumstances in which some benefits can be derived from women’s migration for work in Nigeria. Figure 3 shows the main ideas in the theory of social stratification, including the value of rewards attached to certain positions and the ranking of women migrants into different positions.

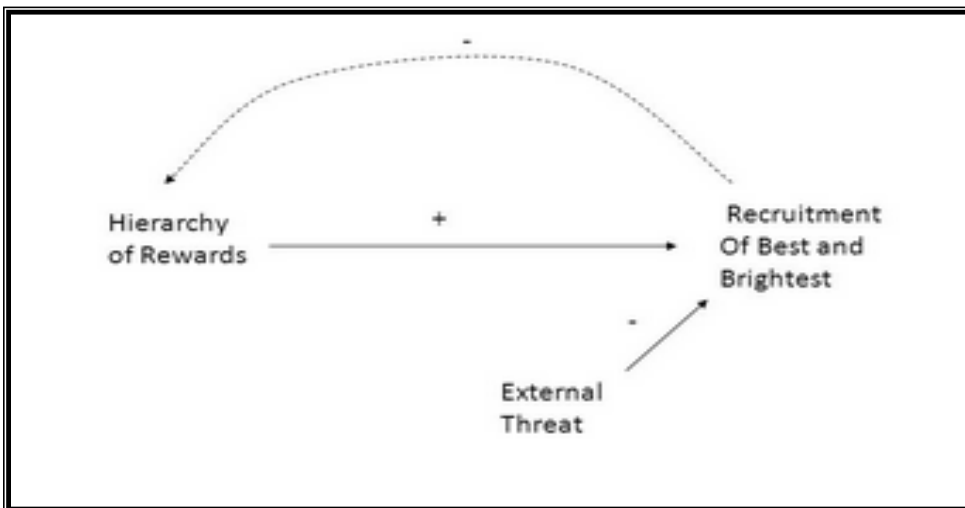


Figure 3 Theory of Social Stratification
Source: Adapted from Davis and Moore⁴⁰

In their theory of social stratification, Davis and Moore⁴⁰ described the existence of unequal rewards for different economic positions in a given society.

³⁹ Jensen, P. H. 2017. “Cause and Effects of Female Labour Force Participation in Local Welfare Systems.” *European Societies* 19(2): 121-137.
⁴⁰ Davis, K. and Moore, W. E. 1945. “Some Principles of Stratification.” *American Sociological Review* 10(2): 242-249.

They argued that the greater the functional importance of a given economic position, the greater the reward attached to the position, and the higher the level of education and training required for the position. However, the rewards attached to a given position may trigger excess supply of candidates for the position and this could lead to a temporary devaluation of the rewards. Thus, an oversupply of candidates for certain positions could lead to debasement of the rewards available for such positions, whereas an undersupply of talents for certain positions could result in increase in the rewards available for such positions. The abovementioned illustration of the theory of social stratification is suitable for an understanding of the benefits of women's migration for work, considering the fact that the benefits could vary from one type of work to another, depending on the level of rewards attached to each work. In this case, women migrants may receive unequal benefits, depending on the level of rewards attached to their work. Also, different persons and organisations may derive some benefits from the work of women migrants.

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

This article was based on content analysis of primary and secondary data. The primary data were obtained through qualitative observations of the identities and economic activities of women migrants in Nigeria. Several qualitative observations were conducted between 2001 and 2022 in some rural and urban areas in 14 states, namely: Adamawa, Borno, Edo, Ekiti, Enugu, Kwara, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo, Plateau, Rivers, and Sokoto.

A qualitative technique of observation was adopted because it is a reliable and accurate method of data collection from a cross section of the study population in a natural setting⁴¹. The duration of each qualitative observation ranged from few hours to several days, with a focus on the following: (1) dressing and appearance, (2) work environment, (3) occupations, (4) conversations, and (5) interactions in real-life situations. The factual accounts of each observation were recorded in writing.

⁴¹Agrosino, M. V. 2016. *Naturalistic Observation*. New York: Routledge.

The secondary data were derived from a systematic review of relevant literature such as books, journals, and other relevant documents, which were derived from reliable databases such as EBSCO Host, Google scholar, and JSTOR. The systematic review of the literature was properly done to show consistency, clarity, brevity, and effective analysis⁴².

The primary and secondary data from the qualitative observations and systematic review of literature were subjected to content analysis, including valid descriptions of different aspects of the subject matter of this article. Content analysis is a systematic and rigorous approach to analysis of documents obtained or generated in the course of a given research⁴³

The qualitative observations revealed how women migrants enacted their power in the course of their occupations and interactions in real-life situations.

Findings on the Benefits of Women's Migration for Work in Nigeria

The main findings on the benefits of women's migration for work in Nigeria are succinctly presented in line with some research questions as shown in Tables 2 and 3.

The findings in Table 2 show the structure of women's migration for work and frequent occupations among women migrants in Nigeria. The findings on the structure of women's migration and frequent occupations among women migrants provide a foundation for an understanding of the benefits of women's migration for work in Nigeria.

⁴²Hart, C. 2018. *Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the Research Imagination*, Second Edition. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

⁴³White, M. D. and Marsh, E. E. 2006. "Content Analysis: A Flexible Methodology." *Library Trends* 55(1): 22-45.

Table 2
Findings on the Structure of Women's Migration for Work in Nigeria

Research Questions	Findings
What is the structure of women's migration for work in Nigeria?	<p>The structure of women's migration for work in Nigeria comprised the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Rural-rural migration with many instances of women migrants in agriculture, particularly in dairy farming as well as cassava and cocoa supply chains in Nigeria b. Rural-urban migration with many instances of women migrants in domestic work and sex industry across cities in Nigeria c. Urban-urban migration with many instances of women migrants in multinational companies and public service organisations d. Urban-rural migration with many instances of women migrants in the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) in Nigeria e. Return migration with many instances of women migrants affected by human trafficking in Nigeria
Which work do women migrants frequently do in Nigeria?	<p>Many women migrants frequently practiced different occupations in the informal economy, while some women migrants were employed in multinational companies and public service organisations. The specific findings on the patterns of occupations among women migrants include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Women migrants were predominant in the informal economy, including agriculture and micro and small-scale enterprises. b. A sizable number of women migrants were employed in multinational companies, including banks, manufacturing industry, telecommunication industry, and oil and gas industry. c. Women migrants were underrepresented in the public service organisations in Nigeria.

Source: Fieldwork (2022)

Table 3
Findings on the Benefits Associated with the Work of Women Migrants in Nigeria

Research Questions	Findings
Of what benefits is women's migration for work in Nigeria?	<p>The benefits associated with the work of women migrants include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Women migrants have demonstrated their experience of autonomy and empowerment in real-life situations and lifelong decisions such as choice of work, choice of spouses, timing of pregnancies and nurturing of children. b. Women migrants largely earned income and contributed to improved living standards in rural and urban areas in Nigeria, c. Women migrants in the informal economy earned income and contributed to community development in rural and urban areas d. Women migrants in agriculture earned income and contributed to food security, autonomy and empowerment of women in rural areas in Nigeria. e. Fulani women earned income and contributed to the success of the dairy development programme (DDP) and incubations of micro enterprises and small-scale businesses in southwest Nigeria. f. Women migrants in domestic work and sex industry earned income and contributed to the well-being of their clients to the detriment of their health and safety.
How do women migrant workers give or receive benefits in Nigeria?	<p>Women migrant workers gave or received benefits through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Participation in the labour force b. Interactions in real-life situations, including membership of voluntary associations. c. Provision of supports to their dependants and significant others d. Contributions to community development programmes

Source: Fieldwork (2022).

Discussions of Findings

The findings on the structure of women's migration for work in Nigeria are somewhat consistent with previous studies showing the prevalence of rural-rural and rural-urban migration in Nigeria. For instance, Mberu (2005, 141)⁴⁴ discovered that the Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba were predominantly rural-rural migrants and the Igbo-Ibibio and Urhobo-Isoko-Edo were predominantly rural-urban migrants, while the highly educated are most likely to choose an urban destination and a significant proportion migrate to other rural areas. In contrast, Nwaokoro (2013, 68)²⁰ provided an illustration of urban-rural migration among the Yoruba as follows:

At Bagbe, a village located few kilometers from Ondo, towards Ore, a couple, Mr. Joseph and Mrs. Julianah Olorunyomi, own four cocoa plantations. They migrated from Ondo town to Bagbe in 1972 in search of fertile land for cocoa cultivation.

Moreover, Makinwa-Adebusoye (1994)¹³ discovered that an increasing number of women in Nigeria participated in rural-urban migration mainly to seek remunerative employment in order to meet some financial obligations. Furthermore, Agathise (2004) demonstrated the fact that women return migrants were recruited as victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation through deception and other dubious strategies.

The findings from a recent study showed that about 60 percent of the Nigerian population is classified as rural, and a large number of migrants migrate and circulate within the rural sector to the extent that there have been many instances of rural-rural migrants seeking economic opportunities, including farmers, seasonal labourers, and pastoralists from resource-poor to resource-rich rural areas, especially from the savannah zones to the fertile coastal areas¹⁷.

⁴⁴Mberu, B. U. 2005. "Who Moves and Who Stays? Rural Out-Migration in Nigeria." *Journal of Population Research* 22: 141-161.

⁴⁵Agathise, E., 2004. "Possible Effects of Government Proposals for Legalization of Brothels". *Violence Against Women*, 10(10): 1126-1155.

Some researchers also discovered that major internal migration in Nigeria occurred from rural to urban areas and within urban areas, including the fact that more than half of the internal migrants in Nigeria lived in urban areas and Lagos has the highest rates of in-migration in Nigeria given that 10 percent of the Nigerian population lived in Lagos metropolis and most migrants from rural to urban areas were young educated men and women in search of employment opportunities in cities^{46;17}.

The findings on the work that women migrants frequently do in Nigeria showed different trajectories ranging from self-employment to wage employment in the private and public sectors. This is consistent with a recent study showing a high presence of women migrants in the informal economy, including agriculture, domestic work and personal care⁴⁷.

Specific evidence showed that some women migrants had large cocoa farms in the cocoa supply chains in Nigeria⁴⁸

Compared with Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Indonesia, Nigeria is the fourth-largest producer of cocoa in the world. Men and women participate in the production of cocoa in 14 states out of the 36 states of Nigeria, while more than 80% of the production of cocoa occurred in southwest Nigeria⁴⁹. The cocoa-producing states of Nigeria include the following: Abia, Adamawa, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Edo, Ekiti, Imo, Kogi, Kwara, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo, and Rivers.

⁴⁶Oyeniya, B. A. 2013. *Internal Migration in Nigeria: A Positive Contribution to Human Development*. Geneva: International Organisation for Migration.

⁴⁷de Haas, H., Castles, S., and Miller, M. J. 2020. *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, Sixth Edition. London: Red Globe Press

⁴⁸Abegunde, T. 2022. "Gender Inequalities in Nigerian Cocoa Production." Last modified June 8, 2022. <https://www.future-agricultures.org/blog/gender-inequalities-in-nigerian-cocoa-production/>

⁴⁹Afolayan, O. S. 2020. "Cocoa Production Pattern in Nigeria: The Missing Link in Regional Agro-Economic Development." *Annals of the University of Oradea, Geography Series* 30(1): 88-96.

A study that captured the career experience of a migrant woman showed that after her commission to the Nigeria Police, Mrs. Adebajo was posted to Rivers State where she remained till 1971 after which she was deployed to the Police College, Ikeja in August 1972, while she was transferred to Ogun State Command as a Divisional Police Officer in charge of Lafenwa Division in February 1981 and in June of the same year she was elevated to the rank of Chief Superintendent of Police (CSP) and posted to the Lagos State Police Command⁵⁰. Similarly, a study showed the presence of a woman migrant from eastern Nigeria as the only practising lawyer in Ondo town in 2012 as shown in Figure 4.

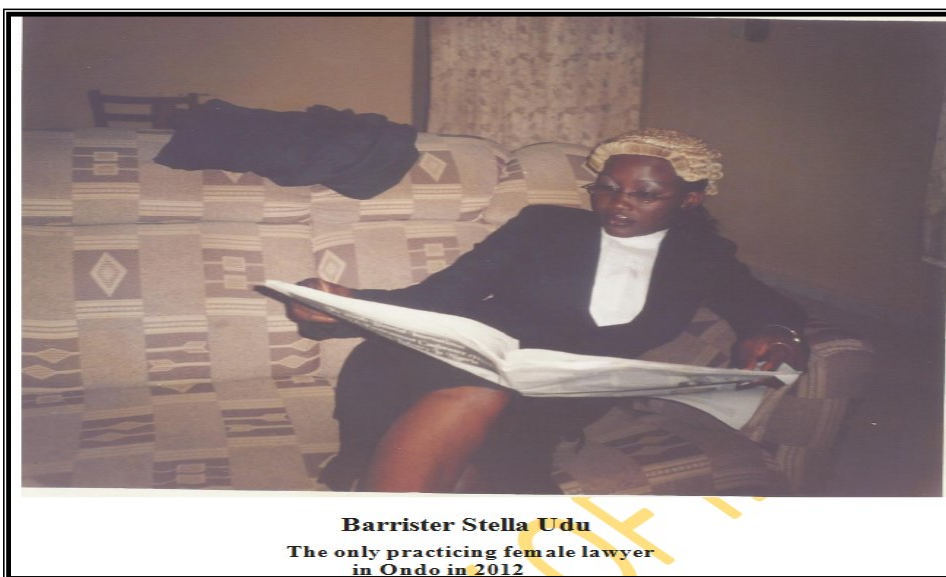


Figure 4: The Only Practising Woman Lawyer in Ondo in 2012

Source: Nwaokoro (2013)²⁰

⁵⁰Adedeji, A. 2010. Contemporary Security Issues in Nigeria: Essays in Honour of Mrs. Florence Oye Adebajo (DIG, RTD). Lagos: Al-Kaharu Publishers.

In his observation of women in various occupations from 1914 to 2014, Oyeweso (2014)⁵¹ confirmed the fact that a significant number of women migrants had worked as farmers, traders, manufacturers, accountants, bankers, lawyers, judicial officers, judges, lecturers, professors, engineers, nurses, midwives, pharmacists, medical doctors, surgeons, and administrators at different locations in Nigeria.

The findings on the benefits of women's migration for work in Nigeria showed that the work of women migrants has been of significant benefits to women migrants and different categories of persons in different ways in rural and urban areas. In accordance with the foregoing, some studies have shown that women's migration for work could enhance women's experience of autonomy or oppression^{52;53;54}.

The finding also revealed that a number of women migrant workers in Nigeria had achieved some levels of autonomy and empowerment in real-life situations. This is consistent with the result of a study which showed that about half of the internal migrants interviewed across 12 states in Nigeria claimed to own houses, while more than half of the migrants claimed to be living in rented apartments⁴⁶. Regarding the ownership of cars, the study revealed that:

About half of the interviewed internal migrants across the twelve states claimed to own personal cars. In Abia, Anambra, Oyo, Lagos, Bayelsa and Cross River just over one thousand internal migrants claimed to have their own cars. In Adamawa, Kwara, Kaduna, Kano, Gombe and Abuja, over one thousand five hundred internal migrants interviewed claimed to have their own cars⁴⁶.

⁵¹Oyeweso, S. 2014. *Breaking the Yoke of Patriarchy: Nigerian Women in the Various Professions, Politics and Governance, 1914-2014*" Abuja: National Judicial Institute.

⁵²Brockhoff, M. 1995. "Fertility and Family Planning in African Cities: The Impact of Female Migration." *Journal of Biosocial Science* 27: 347-358.

⁵³Park, K. 2008. "I Can Provide for my Children: Korean Immigrant Women's Changing Perspectives on Work Outside the Home." *Gender Issues* 25(1): 26-42.

⁵⁴Regassa, R. and Yusufe, A. 2009. "Gender Differentials in Migration Impacts in Southern Ethiopia." *Anthropologist* 11(2): 129-137.

Regarding the benefits associated with the work of women migrants in agriculture, the beneficiaries from the role of women migrants in the cocoa supply chains in Nigeria include the following: (1) women migrant farmers, (2) husband and children of women migrant farmers, (3) chocolate manufacturing companies, (4) members of the cocoa farmers associations, (5) labourers, (6) sharecroppers, (7), input suppliers, and (8) cocoa buyers and processors. Consistent with the abovementioned list of beneficiaries, the role of women migrants in the cocoa supply chains was highlighted with the official launch of the Women in Cocoa and Chocolate Network (WINCC) at the 3rd World Cocoa Conference, which was held in Dominican Republic under the auspices of Solidaridad⁵⁵.

Regarding the benefits associated with the role of Fulani women in the success of the Dairy Development Programme (DDP) in Nigeria, the finding revealed that Fulani women supplied the raw milk they extracted from cattle to the multinational dairy company at their destinations in southwest Nigeria. The beneficiaries from the role of Fulani women in the DDP include the following: (1) Fulani women, (2) Friesland Campina, (3) milk transporters, (4) employees of Friesland Campina, (5) government officials from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, (6) input suppliers, (7) Fulani men and their children, (8) money deposit banks, (9) cattle, (10) non-governmental organisations, (11) food vendors and other traders, (12) members of the communities, and (13) consumers of peak milk in Nigeria.

The findings on how women migrant workers gave or received benefits in Nigeria showed that women migrant workers gave or received benefits through their participation in the labour force and membership of voluntary associations. They also gave benefits through provision of supports to their dependants and significant others. Moreover, they gave or received benefits through their contributions to community development programmes in rural and urban areas.

⁵⁵Fadika, S. 2016. "The Role of Women in Sustainable Cocoa Production." Last modified June 8, 2022 <https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/insights/role-of-women-in-sustainable-cocoa-production/>

Similarly, concerning how women migrants contributed to community development programmes, Aham-Okoro (2017)⁵⁶ noted that the women migrants from Igboland contributed to community development in different ways, including remittances, formation of social groups, and provision of humanitarian services to underprivileged individuals in Igboland.

Consistent with the abovementioned findings, a study showed how women migrant workers in southwest Nigeria provided necessary support to fellow women through their membership of market women association with the fact that:

The market association has been found to help in uplifting the economic status of women. One of the main functions of the associations is the provision of capital to members to expand their businesses. They derive their capital from contributions of members, levies and fines. (Nwaokoro, 2013, 172)²⁰

A survey of internal migrants in 12 states in Nigeria showed that a large majority of internal migrants claimed to be sending remittances home to fund dependants' education while 1,066 migrants claimed to be sending remittances home to care for their parents, and 1,132 migrants claimed to be sending remittances home to either start or complete new projects⁴⁶.

⁵⁶Aham-Okoro, S. U. 2017. *Igbo Women in the Diaspora and Community Development in Southeastern Nigeria: Gender, Migration and Development in Africa*. Lanham: Lexington Books

Conclusion

This article examined the benefits of women's migration for work in Nigeria through content analysis of primary and secondary data obtained from qualitative observations and systematic review of relevant literature. This article specifically focused on the structure of women's migration for work, the predominant occupations among women migrant workers, and the multiplier effects of women's migration for work in Nigeria.

Considering the information provided in this article, women's migration for work occurred in different forms such as rural-rural migration, rural-urban migration, urban-rural migration, urban-urban migration, and return migration. Interestingly, the cases of rural-rural migrations and rural-urban migrations were more prevalent than other cases of women's migration for work in Nigeria. This trend has provided a basis for an understanding of the predominant occupations among women migrant workers in rural and urban areas of Nigeria. Justifiably, women migrant workers in Nigeria largely established their livelihoods in the informal economy, including agriculture, trading, domestic work and sex industry.

The work of women migrants varied from one destination to another, including self-employment and wage employment with multiplier effects on the individual and household economies of the women migrant workers in rural and urban areas of Nigeria. Women and other categories of persons have derived significant benefits from the work of women migrants in different ways, depending on the level of importance associated with the work of women migrants. The beneficiaries of the work of women migrants in rural areas were different from the beneficiaries of the work of women migrants in urban areas.

Women migrant workers in Nigeria gave or received benefits through their participation in the labour force and membership of voluntary associations as well as interactions in real-life situations, including provision of supports to their dependants and significant others and contributions to community development programmes in rural and urban areas of Nigeria. Therefore, women migrant workers deserve more recognition and support towards enhancing their contributions to socio-economic development of rural and urban areas of Nigeria.

The benefits associated with women's migration for work are numerous but many women migrant workers have experienced some frustrations due to lack of adequate protections against health and safety hazards in their workplaces. This is evidenced by the contributions and concerns of women migrants in agriculture, women migrants in domestic work, women migrants in the sex industry, and women migrants in the public service organisations, among others. In fact, the benefits of women's migration for work are tainted with experience of frustrations, which require urgent attention in Nigeria. Thus, the policymakers in Nigeria should recognise and support the creativities and potentials of women migrant workers to promote the socioeconomic development of the rural and urban areas of Nigeria

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