Chapter 17
Predicting Migration to Developed Countries: The Place of Media Attention

Mutiu Iyanda Lasisi  
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0022-711X  
Infoprations Limited, Lagos, Nigeria

Rasheed Ademola Adebiyi  
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2618-1263  
Fountain University, Osogbo, Nigeria

Umar Olansile Ajetunmobi  
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3670-5251  
Infoprations Limited, Lagos, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Development communication experts posit that human migration occurs when people move from their home country into a new country in order to make a new home, or for other related reasons. In this chapter, authors examine how the media reportage of developed countries such as the United States of America, United Kingdom and among others which facilitate Nigerians’ attention and establishing the extent to which they migrate to the countries using a quantitative approach. Though, data did not reveal significant prediction as expected, the partial prediction established that the volume of news coverage on developed countries would continue to enhance the citizens’ movement into these developed countries.

INTRODUCTION

Development communication experts (Raymer, 2017; Cummings, Pacitto, Lauro & Foresti, 2015; Bob-Milliar & Bob-Milliar, 2013 and Jacomella, 2010) posit that human migration occurs when people move from their home country into a new country in order to make a new home, a better living, to seek asylum.

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and embrace a promising economic opportunity or for other related socio-economic and cultural reasons. Similarly, ‘conflict, poverty, inequality and lack of decent jobs compel people to pursue a better future in foreign countries (United Nations, 2016, p. 2) while one in three Nigerians have considered emigration, mostly to find economic opportunity (Isbell & Ojewale, 2018). According to Cummings, et al., (2015), of these global migrants, more than 1 billion of them all over the world (World Economic Forum, 2017) might travel as irregular migrants or asylum-seekers/refugees. Irregular migrants comprise the ‘flow of people who enter a country without that country’s legal permission to do so (p. 9)” while asylum-seekers leave their own country, often for political reasons or because of war, and travel to another country hoping that the government will protect them and allow them to live there (under the international law). Other international migration forms include voluntary (on the migrants’ freewill) and involuntary (forced, internally displaced, refugee and reluctant) (World Economic Forum, 2017).

From 1970 to 2015, there had been a geometrical progression in the movement of people globally. For instance, the IOM’s report of 2018 indicates that in 2000, an estimated 173 million people migrated globally. In 2005, 2010 and 2015, the figure rose to 191, 222 and 244 million respectively. Despite these figures, 2.3 million non-Africans, most of whom migrated from Asia and Europe turned to Africa in 2015 (International Organisation for Migration, 2018). According to the 2017 United Nations’ report on migration stock, about five million West Africans migrated to other continents in 2000 and out of this figure, five hundred thousand were Nigerians. In 2005, out of the 5.6 million West Africans who left the continent, about 1 million of them were from Nigeria. The figure rose to about 6 million in 2010; and during this period, about 1 million people left Nigeria. Five years later, about 1.2 million Nigerians were among the 7 million West Africans that migrated. In 2017, out of 6.7 million West Africans that deserted the continent, more than 1.2 million were Nigerians. Similarly, International Organisation for Migration’s (2018) report shows that 1.8 million and 1.7 million Nigerians migrated out of the country in 2012 and 2013, respectively. In fact, the report adds that out of the 21.8 million Africans living outside Africa in 2010, Nigeria recorded the 6th highest stock out of 10 African countries. Another striking revelation by Kirwin and Anderson (2018) as documented in OECD’s report indicates that 50% of Nigerians would leave their country if they had the means and the opportunity to do so.

Reports also indicate that between 2000 and 2015, Europe, Asia, North America and Africa were the continents Africans mostly migrated to. From 2000 to 2013, Nigerians found solace in United States of America, United Kingdom and some European (Germany, Spain, Italy, among others) as well as Asian countries. Interestingly, the underlying data from immigration statistics yearbooks of Canada and the UK, the US Statistical Abstract and World Development Indicators (2007) indicate that between 1977 and 2005, Italy and United States of America were the two countries Nigerians migrated to concurrently. The pattern changed to United States of America and Canada between 2005 and 2008.

In 2013, 35.6% of Nigerian migrants lived in African countries, 34.2% in Europe, and 26.4% in North America; the rest lived in Asia Latin America, the Caribbean and Oceania. Nigerian migrants in African countries mostly live in West Africa (46.2%) and Middle Africa (42%). From the most preferred to the least preferred, the destinations of Nigerian emigrants within Africa were Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Benin, Ghana, Gabon, Niger, Togo and Sudan. In Asia, Saudi Arabia is the most important destination with the United Arab Emirates in a distant second position. The most preferred destinations in Europe include the United Kingdom (184,314), Italy (48,073), Spain (36,885), Germany (22,687) and Ireland (18,540). The United States was the single most important destination of Nigerian migrants in 2013 as it has been since 1990, with 252,172 or about 25% of all Nigerian emigrants (International Organization for Migration, 2016: 30-31).