




Research Article

Pattern of Youths Migration and its Implications on Cereal Crop Farmers in Kwara State, Nigeria

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history Received: 07 Jan 2022 Accepted: 04 Mar 2022 Published: 31 Mar 2022</p> <p>Keywords Cereal crops Migration Pull factors Push factors Youths (8 Calibri)</p> <p>Correspondence Mohammed Ibrahim [✉]: m.ibrahim@futminna.edu.ng</p> <p> OPEN ACCESS</p>	<p>The study assessed the effects of rural youths' migration pattern on small-scale cereal crops farmers in Kwara State, Nigeria, the specific objectives of the study were to describe the socio-economic characteristics of the farming households, examine the push and pull factors of youth migration, ascertain the perceived effects of rural youth migration on small-scale cereal crop farming households, and examine various mitigating strategies adopted in the study area. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select a total number of 400 cereal farmers. Data were collected from primary source using structured questionnaire complemented with interview schedule. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics (SPSS 16.0) including mean, frequency and percentages. The results showed that majority (94%) of cereal farmers were males with mean age of 43 years. Majority (86%) of cereal farmers were married, with mean household of 6 persons. The mean years of farming experience was 29 years while 60% of the respondents were full-time farmers. Further findings revealed that poverty (91%) and natural disasters (89.5%) were the major push factors causing youths migration in the study area while alternative sources of income during off-season (100%) and better employment opportunities and labour (99%), respectively were the major pull causes of youths' migration to cities in the study area. Establishment of bank of agriculture in rural areas for easy access to loans (\bar{x}=3.86) and establishment of agro-allied industries (\bar{x}=3.78) were the major strategies used to mitigate rural youth migration. It was recommended that skills acquisition and entrepreneurship should be provided to enable youths to stay in the rural area, efforts should be put in place by government and non-governmental organization through the assistance of national disaster control in order to check the incidence of flood and bush burning that push youth out of the rural areas. (8 Calibri).</p>
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Introduction

Globally, increasing migration has raised concerns about rural youth abandoning agriculture, and the implications for agricultural productivity, food security and livelihood (Yeboah, 2018). Migration is the movement of individuals from one geographical space to another, involving permanent or temporary residence or settlement due to certain reasons such as natural disaster, physical conditions, worry of insecurity, differences in economic opportunities, differences in social amenities and change in standard of living such as high level of education and wealth (United Nation (UN), 2013). Youth migration is one of the key factors that affect farm labour supply in Agricultural productivity (Oluyole *et al.*, 2013). Nigeria youths tend

to look down upon farming but prefer to migrate from rural areas to urban centres where they hope to get job opportunities and other social amenities, such portable drinking water, quality health care. This attitude is the main problem confronting the agricultural productivities of small-scale farming household in Nigeria. With fewer youths into farming, the long-term future of the agricultural sector in Nigeria is questionable because a larger population of youths represents the link between the present and the future as well as a reservoir of labour (Okeowo *et al.*, 2013). This phenomenon consequently resulted to high cost of production, low productivity, and reduction in annual income and a falling standard of living of the rural populace (Akangbe *et al.*, 2006). Farm labour provided by active and energetic youth is considered as an

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essential component of agricultural productivity in rural areas, because agriculture in isolated areas of an open country with low technology is human labour dependent amongst other things such as land and capital rural farmers, due to peasantry nature of the farm operation and low income status, mostly depend on family labour, which is mostly provided by the youth. The level of poverty, lack of job opportunities and gross inadequacy of social infrastructures was found to be one of the causes of youths rural-urban migration (Aworemi *et al.*, 2011). Farm labour seasonal migration is often tremendous in magnitude and is widespread throughout the rural communities of Nigeria. Rural youths in Nigeria have the potentials needed to participate effectively in agricultural development. Majority of agricultural policies and programmes formulated in Nigeria do not consider constraints confronting youths involved in agricultural production (Agu, 2013). Major problems encountered by youths in agriculture include lack of interest in agriculture as a result of drudgery in farm operations, lack of competitive market for agricultural products, lack of start-up capital, inadequate labour saving technologies for ease of farm operations, inadequate finance/credit facilities, among others. As a result, they are faced with serious economic challenges which result in undue poverty and vulnerability (Adekunle *et al.*, 2009). Farmers send their children to cities and towns in order to obtain an education and skill acquisition. Despite the introduction of mechanized farming in Nigeria, human labour remains dominant in all agricultural activities. Labour requirement for successful farm operation in non-mechanized agriculture is high for land preparation, planting, fertilizer application, weeding and harvesting (Babalola, 2002). Farm labour supply, especially for planting, weeding, and harvesting still constitutes a serious bottleneck. Due to the labour intensive nature of agriculture, ageing farmers cannot cultivate more land, but need to hire labour to substitute lost family labour.

These problems aforementioned had one way or the other affected agricultural productivities of small-scale cereal crop farmers particularly in the study area. The study would also provide an insight to policy makers and agricultural programme planners as to how best to address the problems of rural-urban youth migration. Similarly, the study unearths new approaches of making agricultural more appealing to the youth in order to boost agricultural production in rural communities and improve household incomes. Results of the study could also be used as a guide for further research. Lastly, the study will help to fill in the existing knowledge gap on the economic impacts of rural-urban migration on rural communities. The aim of this research was to determine the pattern of rural youths' migration and its

implication on small-scale cereal crops farmers in Kwara State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to describe the socio-economic characteristics of the farming household in the study area, examine the push and pull factors of youth migration in the study area, ascertain the perceived effects of rural youth migration on the productivity of small-scale cereal crop farming household in the study area, and examine various mitigating strategies adopted for reducing rural youth migration in the study area. (10 Calibri, left-right).

Methodology

The Study Area (10 Calibri, Italic)

The study was conducted in Kwara state, Nigeria. The state has 16 Local Government Areas, which are grouped into four zones – A, B, C, and D.

Sampling and data collection

A multi-stage random sampling technique was employed in the selection of respondents. The first stage involved purposive selection of one (1) Local Government Areas from each of agricultural zones based on the predominance of cereal crops production activities. These were Baruteen LGAs in Zone A, Patigi LGAs in Zone B, Asa LGAs in Zone C and Oyun LGAs in Zone D. The second stage involved random selection of two villages from each of the selected Local Government Areas and 50 farmers were interviewed from each of this villages. This gave a total of 400 farmers. Data were collected from these respondents using well-structured questionnaire complemented with an interview schedule.

Statistical analyses

Collected data were analyzed using both descriptive like mean, frequency percentage as well as the likert scale rating techniques. The perceived effects of rural-urban youth migration on small scale crop farmers were analyzed using three pointed scale of High effect,(HE) Moderate effect (ME) and No-effect (NE) with values of 3,2 and 1, respectively. These were ranked using a weighted mean (\bar{x}). The mean score of the respondents based on the 3 - point likert scale was obtained thus:

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{\sum fx}{n}$$

$$\frac{\sum fx}{n} = \frac{3+2+1}{3} = \frac{6}{3} = 2.00$$

Cut-off mean score was 2.00 for a given response. Hence, for any effect with mean score below 2 was considered as low effect and any mean score greater than or equal to 2, was considered as high effect. Also, a 5 point Likert scale rating technique was used to identify various mitigating strategies adopted for reducing rural-urban youth migration. This was rated as

Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Strongly Disagree (SD), and Disagree (D)

Results and Discussion

Socioeconomic characteristic of cereal farmers in the study area (10 Calibri, Italic)

Table 1 revealed that 94.0% of the survey respondents were males. The mean age of the cereal farmers in the study was 43 years and 85.5% of them were married. This is in agreement with Adegboye *et al.*, (2008) who stated that involvement of the married people in farming activities is because of the need to supplement family means of livelihood and improved income. The mean household size was 6 persons. Respondents had one form of formal education or the other. This agreed with Ango *et al.* (2014), who reported that most of farming populace in Sokoto State, Nigeria had formal education. Majority of the cereal farmers (93.5%) had farming as primary occupation. It indicates that farming is a major source of livelihood for the respondents in the study area. This finding is in consonance with the finding of Mbah *et al.* (2016), who reported that larger percentage of Benue population had farming as primary occupation. The mean farming experience of the respondents was 29 years. This mean that respondents has been in farming activities for long. This finding is in line with Effiong and Effiong (2015), who reported that most of the farmers in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria had high experience in farming. Majority (80.0%) were members of cooperative. This finding agreed with Mbat *et al.* (2016), who stated that larger percentage of farm families in Benue State, Nigeria were member of cooperative societies.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to socio-economics characteristics (n=400)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Males	376	94.0	
Females	24	6.0	
Age			43
<31	18	4.5	
31-40	24	36.0	
41-50	164	41.0	
51-60	74	18.5	
Marital status			
Single	12	3.0	
Married	342	85.5	
Widowed	46	11.5	
Household size			6
1-5	214	53.5	
6-10	178	44.5	
11-15	8	2.0	

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
<i>Educational status</i>			
Primary	114	28.5	
Secondary	56	14.0	
Tertiary	108	27.0	
Non-formal	24	6.0	
Adult	98	24.5	
<i>Primary occupation</i>			
Farming	374	93.5	
Gathering	6	1.5	
Artisan	16	4.0	
Agro processing	4	1.0	
<i>Coperataive</i>			
Member	320	80	
Non Member	80	20	
<i>Farming experience</i>			
11-20	22	5.5	29
21-30	248	62.0	
31-40	130	32.5	

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Push and pull Factors associated with youth migration

Table 2 indicated that poverty and natural disaster were the major reason why rural youth migrate to urban centers and they were ranked first and second, respectively. This means that poverty and natural disaster, including flood could influence the influx of youth to cities in seeking for greener pastures. This finding is in accordance with Ayinde *et al.* (2014), who reported that poverty was the major factors responsible for youth migration in Nigeria. Pull factors includes alternative sources of income during off-season and better employment opportunities and labour wages were major reason why rural youths settled in cities and ranked first and second, respectively. The reported finding agreed with Basil *et al.* (2017), who reported that alternative sources of income and better employment opportunities were responsible for youth migration in Ondo State, Nigeria.

Perceived Effect of Rural Youths Migration on Cereal Crop Production

Table 3. Revealed that falling standard of living (\bar{X} =2.92), low agricultural productivities (\bar{X} =2.81) and household food insecurity (\bar{X} =2.78) rank first, second, and third, respectively were mostly affected by the migrants. This agreed with Nnadi *et al.* (2015), who reported that majority of Nigerian youths migrate for improved standard of living, Similarly Eze (2014) reported that low agricultural productivities and food insecurity were one of the major effects of youths migration to cities in Nigeria.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to pull and Push Factors (n=400)

Push Factors	Frequency	Percentage	Ranks
Poverty	364	91.0	1 st
Natural disaster	358	89.5	2 nd
Inadequate employment opportunities	346	86.5	3 rd
Poor medical care services	344	86.0	4 th
Famine and drought	340	85.0	5 th
Absence of social amenities	334	83.5	6 th
Displacement	330	82.5	7 th
Poor agricultural productivities	326	81.5	8 th
Bad climate	316	79.0	9 th
Lack of interest in farming	220	55.0	10 th
Poor chance of marrying	138	34.5	11 th
Escape from punishment	110	27.5	12 th
Pull factors			
Alternative sources of income during off-season	400	100.0	1 st
Labour wages	396	99.0	2 nd
Better employment opportunities	396	99.0	2 nd
Higher incomes	394	98.5	4 th
Re-union with family member in the city	390	97.5	5 th
Search for high education	374	93.5	6 th
Apprenticeship programmes	368	92.0	7 th
Better technology	294	73.5	8 th
Urban facilities and ways of life	240	60.0	9 th
Desire for more political or religious power	234	58.5	10 th
Change of environment	128	32.0	11 th
Better transport system	112	28.0	12 th
Social status of ones parents	64	16.0	13 th
Better housing in the city	56	14.0	14 th

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 3. Distribution of respondents base on perceived effect of rural youths migration (n=400)

Variables	WS	WM	Decision	Rank
Fall in standard of living	585	2.92	HE	1 st
Low agricultural productivities	562	2.81	HE	2 nd
Household food insecurity	556	2.78	HE	3 rd
Leads to poverty among farm families	538	2.69	HE	4 th
Reduction in hired labour	535	2.68	HE	5 th
Poor yield of crops as a result of farm input	534	2.67	HE	6 th
Farm work is mostly done by aged parents	523	2.62	HE	7 th
High cost of labour	519	2.60	HE	8 th
Reduction in farm size	514	2.57	HE	9 th
Reduction in household annual income	513	2.57	HE	9 th
Reduction in family labour	504	2.52	HE	11 th
Leads to diversification in to non-farm occupation	475	2.38	HE	12 th
Reduces demand on locally grown foods	376	1.88	LE	13 th
Reduces formation of groups and cooperative societies among youths	373	1.86	LE	14 th
Low community development activities	329	1.65	LE	15 th
Decrease in the dependency ratio	322	1.61	LE	16 th

Sources: Field survey, 2021

Note: WS=Weighted sum, WM=Weighted Mean HE=High effect, LE=Low effects

Strategies to Mitigate Rural Youth Migration

Table 4 indicated that establishment of bank of agriculture in rural areas for easy access to loans (\bar{X}

=3.86) and establishment of agro-allied industries (\bar{X} =3.78) were most effective strategies to mitigate rural youth migration. This finding agreed with Mbah et al.

(2016) who revealed that establishment of BOA and agro-allied industries were the major strategies to mitigate rural youth migration.

Table 4. Distribution of respondents according to mitigating strategies (n=400)

Variables	WS	WM	Decission	Rank
<i>Establishment of bank of agriculture in rural areas for easy access to loans</i>	1544	3.86	Relevant	1 st
<i>Establishment of agro-allied industries</i>	1512	3.78	Relevant	2 nd
<i>Establishment of vocational training centers</i>	1478	3.70	Relevant	3 rd
<i>Use of improved modern technologies</i>	1462	3.65	Relevant	4 th
<i>Empowering and integrating rural youths into agricultural based activities</i>	1450	3.63	Relevant	5 th
<i>Use of improved method of farming in order to attract youths</i>	1412	3.53	Relevant	6 th
<i>Provision of incentives such as micro-credit</i>	1408	3.52	Relevant	7 th
<i>Establishment of agro-processing centers</i>	1388	3.47	Relevant	8 th
<i>Provision of basic amenities</i>	1344	3.46	Relevant	9 th
<i>Subsidizing price of farm inputs</i>	1362	3.41	Relevant	10 th
<i>Regular and timely provision of farm inputs</i>	1260	3.15	Relevant	11 th
<i>Provision of improved varieties of crops and breed of livestock</i>	1120	2.80	Not relevant	12 th
<i>Encouraging formation of groups and societies</i>	990	2.47	Not relevant	13 th
<i>Establishment of advocacy programme</i>	872	2.18	Not relevant	

Source: Field Survey,2021

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that majority of the cereal farmers in the study area who migrated were youth with formal education and high experience in cereals farming. Poverty and natural disaster were the major push factors causes of rural youth migration, while alternative sources of income during off-season and better employment opportunities and labour wages were the major pull factors that causes rural youth migration. The mostly affected area was low agricultural productivities. Further findings showed that establishment of bank of agriculture in rural areas for easy access to loans and establishment of agro-allied industries were the major strategies to mitigate rural youth migration in the study area. The following recommendations were made based on the empirical findings of the study. Empowerment programmes through skills acquisition and entrepreneurship that enable youths to stay in the rural area should be embarked upon. Efforts should be put in place by government and non-governmental organization through the assistance of national disaster control in order to check the incidence of flood and bush burning. Youth should try and diversify their enterprises in order to bridge the gap between the cropping season and off season.

Authors contribution

I.M. Conceived idea of the research, designed instrument for data collection, supervision of

questionnaire administration and writing of manuscript. M.A.A: Administered and collected the questionnaires S.I.T: Cleaned the data and reviewed the manuscript. M.U.S: Analyses the data. All authors read and approved the final version to be publish

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Competing Interest

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